THE NUBA

An Anthropological Study of the Hill Tribes in Kordofan

by

S. F. NADEL

With a Foreword by

MAJOR GENERAL SIR HUBERT HUDDLESTON

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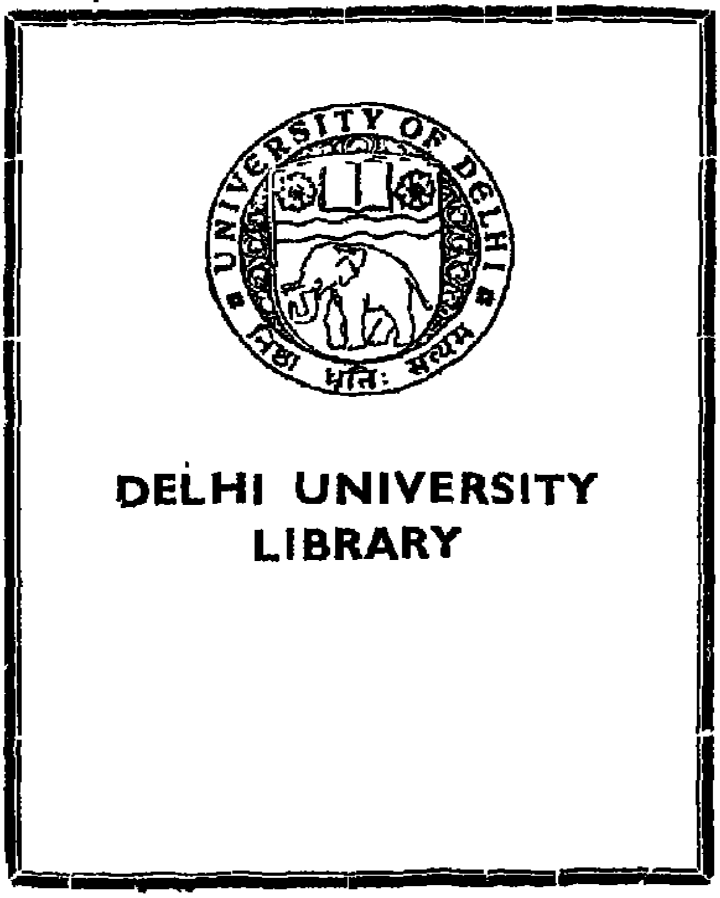

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THE NUBA

AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE HILL TRIBES IN KORDOFAN

by

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CONTENTS

PAGE

FOREWORD by Major-General Sir Hubert Huddleston xi

CHAP.

I. INTRODUCTION 1
The Nuba Peoples—Language and Culture—History and Migrations—Plan of Study—Definitions

II. ECONOMIC LIFE 15
Agricultural Technique—Land Resources—Acquisition of Land—The Year's Cycle—Storage and Consumption—Organization of Labour

III. ECONOMIC LIFE (*continued*) 58
Hunting—Livestock and Wealth—Property, Industries, Exchange—Efficiency and Prospects of Nuba Economy

IV. HEIBAN AND OTORO 84
People and Country—Settlement and Homestead—Clan—Kindred—Marriage—Widowhood and Parentage—Divorce—Inheritance

V. HEIBAN AND OTORO (*continued*) 132
Adolescence and Adulthood—Law and Political System—The Tribal Code—Modern Jurisdiction—Chieftainship—Conclusion

VI. TIRA AND MORO 175
People and Country—Settlement and Homestead—Clan—Kindred—Marriage—Widowhood and Parentage—Divorce—Inheritance

VII. TIRA AND MORO (*continued*) 229
Adolescence and Adulthood—Political System—The Tribal Code—Modern Jurisdiction—Chieftainship—Conclusion

VIII. KORONGO AND MESAKIN 267
People and Country—Settlement and Homestead—Clan—Kindred—Marriage—Widowhood and Divorce—Inheritance—Adolescence and Adulthood—Political System—The Tribal Code—Chieftainship—Modern Law and Administration—Conclusion

IX. TULLISHI 319
People and Country—Settlement—Homestead—Clan—Kindred—Marriage—Widowhood and Divorce—Inheritance—Adolescence and Adulthood—Chieftainship—The Tribal Code—Modern Law and Administration—Conclusion

PAGE

X. KOALIB, NYIMA, DILLING 358
People and Country—(1) Koalib: Settlement and Homestead—Clan—Kindred—Marriage—Widowhood, Divorce, Inheritance
(2) Nyima: Settlement and Homestead—Clan—Kindred—Marriage—Widowhood, Divorce, Inheritance—Adolescence and Adulthood
(3) Dilling: Settlement and Homestead—Clan—Kindred—Marriage—Widowhood and Divorce—Inheritance—Adolescence and Adulthood

XI. KOALIB, NYIMA, DILLING (*continued*) 440
Spirit Cult—Chieftainship—The Tribal Code—Modern Law and Administration—Conclusion

XII. EPILOGUE: TRENDS AND PROSPECTS. 481
Culture Change and Arab Influence—Political Federation—Chieftainship and Government—Introduction to Primitive Law—The Future of Nuba Law

APPENDICES:

I. POPULATION STATISTICS 514

II. HEALTH AND NUTRITION 517

INDEX 521

MAP OF THE NUBA MOUNTAINS . . . . . *At end*

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

AGE-GRADE DANCE IN OTORO (*tirú*) . . . . *Frontispiece*

facing page

PLANTING IN HEIBAN 98

HOEING IN HEIBAN 98

TERRACED CULTIVATIONS IN OTORO (CHUNGUR) 99

WEEDING IN OTORO 99

STACKING GRAIN IN HEIBAN 114

THRESHING IN OTORO 114

Angreb-MAKER IN OTORO (CHUNGUR) 115

POTTERY 'FACTORY' IN TIRA 115

OTORO HUNTERS SETTING OUT ON AN EXPEDITION . . . 146

NYIMA HILLS 146

DILLING 147

WATERING CATTLE IN KORONGO 147

SPEARING OF BULLS IN KORONGO FUNERAL FEAST . . . 162

ARAB ROAD SHOPS IN KORONGO 162

URILA HILL IN OTORO 163

HEIBAN MOUNTAIN 163

HARVEST RITE OVER NEWLY THRESHED GRAIN IN HEIBAN . . 178

WRESTLING TOURNAMENT IN OTORO 178

CEREMONY OF 'FILLING THE GRANARY' IN HEIBAN: PAINTING THE GRANARY 179

BRIDAL PROCESSION IN OTORO 179

KOALIB WOMAN 194

FARM WORK OF AGE-GRADES IN OTORO 194

CICATRIZATION IN OTORO 195

Mek ARNO OF OTORO 195

MORO HILLS: THE VILLAGE UMM DOREIN 226

PREPARATIONS FOR KINSHIP FEAST IN TIRA 226

STICK-FIGHTING TOURNAMENT IN TIRA 227

WRESTLING TOURNAMENT IN TIRA 227

CICATRIZATION IN TIRA: THE OPERATION 242

facing page

CICATRIZATION IN TIRA: THE NEW *romoco* DANCES THROUGH THE VILLAGE 242

MORO STICK-FIGHTING TOURNAMENT: THE OLD MEN OPEN THE FIGHT 243

MORO STICK-FIGHTING TOURNAMENT: AT THE HEIGHT OF THE FIGHT 243

KORONGO HILLS: THE VILLAGE TABANY 306

MESAKIN HILLS: THE VILLAGE TOZARI 306

YOUNG MEN OF KORONGO MARCHING TO WRESTLING TOURNAMENT 307

MESAKIN GIRLS WHO HAVE 'ENTERED THE GRANARY' . . . 307

TULLISHI: THE VILLAGE KARLENYA 322

TULLISHI: 'FUNERAL HILL' 322

TULLISHI WOMEN 323

CHIEF OF TULLISHI IN THE SACRED ENCLOSURE OF HIS HOUSE . 323

INSTALLATION OF *Bayei* PRIEST IN KOALIB 386

NYIMA *Kujur* IN TRANCE 386

DILLING WOMAN WITH HAIR DRESS INDICATING *uro-niri* MOIETY 387

Shil OF DILLING 387

NYIMA: DANCE AFTER CIRCUMCISION IN HONOUR OF SPIRIT PRIEST 402

DANCE IN ARAB STYLE IN TIRA MANDE 402

CHIEF OF 'ARABICIZED' KAMDANG 403

NATIVE COURT SESSION IN TIRA 403

FOREWORD

By MAJOR-GENERAL SIR HUBERT HUDDLESTON, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O., M.C., *Governor-General of the Sudan*

THIS book owes its inception to the late Sir Douglas Newbold, whose premature death in harness as Civil Secretary was a grievous loss to the Sudan and to culture, and by whom this preface should have been written. Sir Douglas in 1937 was Governor of Kordofan Province, when he suggested that the time had come for an anthropological study to be made of the Nuba, a congeries of primitive pagan tribes who inhabit the hilly country in the south-west of Kordofan.

In the early days the contact of the Administration with the Nuba had frequently culminated in a small military patrol directed now against one hill and now against another. But 1926 saw the last of these patrols, and eleven years later Newbold felt that the material advance of the Nuba was outstripping their mental and cultural advance. Elementary Education among them was lagging behind. They were being powerfully affected by the authority of the Government, the forces of economics and the influence of science (medical, mechanical and agricultural) with effects some of which were visible and some of which could only be surmised. Their lives were still largely conditioned by superstitions and customs imperfectly known to the Administration. Political officers and others had in the past collected a mass of information about Nuba society and Nuba customs, but Newbold suggested that an anthropological investigation of the Nuba by a fresh mind without Government bias was needed to enable Government to see whether the right solutions were being found to pressing problems in elementary education, tribal federation and agricultural development. Was the constructive effect of the Administration outweighing the destructive? Keen officials, especially technical officials, were apt to override native customs rather than to make use of them. Here Newbold quoted Mr. W. G. Ormsby Gore, then Secretary of State for the Colonies:

> The Englishman going overseas must know more of the background, the culture and the tradition of those with whom he has to deal. Too often knowledge of a people overseas is limited to their language and to the superficial day to day contacts rather than to the fundamental traditions of their race.

and he asked the Sudan Government to find the funds for a definite piece of research in what Lord Hailey had called 'the greatest science of all, the science of promoting human relations'.

Thus the book was primarily planned to be of practical value to administrators and others, and Dr. Nadel, who had just completed a study

of the culture and political structure of the Nupe Kingdom in Northern Nigeria, was found, with the help of the International African Institute, to write it.

Dr. Nadel arrived in the Sudan in April 1938. Before his survey was completed, the war had started, and the book was eventually written in El Obeid during those fateful months in 1940–1 when all the institutions we value seemed in danger, and it must have needed no ordinary self-control on his part to concentrate on the work in hand, when he was anxious to get away and take his share in combatting the powers of evil.

Eventually in August 1941 Dr. Nadel was appointed a political officer in the British Military Administration of Eritrea; and since then both there and later in North Africa he has served with distinction, applying anthropology to the administration of peoples of various origin and tradition, with all that understanding of primitive mentality and appreciation of administrative problems which he showed during his two years in the Nuba Mountains.

Dr. Nadel in writing this book kept before him Newbold's instruction that he should study the economic and political organization of the Nuba, their religious beliefs and their psychological and social background. And administrators and others who live and work among the Nuba will find that it will shed light on their daily contacts with the people and the problems which arise in those contacts. One can recount here but few of the points made in the book which are of widespread interest, and then encourage the reader to study for himself what Dr. Nadel has to say. He finds that there is no single Nuba culture—there are a number of communities who vary, not only in the language they speak, but in their social organization and their reaction to their surroundings. The peculiarities of each community must be studied, but there is much that is applicable to all.

The Nuba hitherto have shown contempt for economics in our sense of the word. Their great Ceremony of the Full Granary encourages industry in agriculture, but maintains a true democratic equality of wealth by arranging for its dissipation. The Nuba place the highest value on manliness, and their age-old ceremonies are potent factors in teaching their youths to be manly, an education far different from our ideas of education in the three 'r's', but education none the less for all that.

It is the Nuba tradition of manliness that has led so many of them to serve in the Army and the police, and to contribute so notably to the military traditions of the Sudan.

Dr. Nadel shows how chieftainship, so important to the Administration, varies in the different communities from practical non-existence to an institution functioning smoothly and effectively as in Dilling. Where the transition to chieftainship is not smooth, political difficulties inevitably occur. Where chiefs existed before the present Government, they frequently arose out of the need for leaders in war. Now that a *pax Britannica* is imposed from outside, the guarantee of peace is ceasing to be

important, and this is giving rise to the need for new loyalties to chief or tribe. Sometimes the chief has arisen out of the rainmaker or other spiritual expert, but under modern conditions the chief is fully employed with the work of the courts and the collection of taxes, and the tendency is for the chief to be separate from the spiritual expert.

Spiritual incarnations are, however, on the increase, due to direct reaction to culture change. The latter leads to repressions and resultant neurotic tendencies in individuals faced with new problems to which there is no traditional answer. As elsewhere the effect of culture contact is being widely felt by the Nuba. New demands lead to dislocation. The possibility of earning money sends young men away from the Nuba Mountains, and reduces their dependence on their elders for the provision of the bride-price for their brides. It also delays the marriage, with consequent increase in prostitution. There are increased opportunities for theft and some other crimes. A man on return from prison finds his wives divorced according to tribal custom. The increasing use of food purchased in markets leads to a great risk of an unwitting breach of food *tabus*. Numerous other examples of the disturbing effect of culture contact on Nuba society could be quoted.

Dr. Nadel discusses the influence of Arab civilization on the Nuba and concludes that while at present their assimilation of it is only superficial and confined to isolated traits, that assimilation will increase. The effect of our Nuba village schools is counterbalanced by the atmosphere the Nuba finds in our Government offices *and* in our other contacts with them. The chief adopts traits and habits which appear to him to carry the hall-mark of the higher civilization, and they are passed on by him to the commoner and reinforced by the innovations introduced by the returning soldier. Dr. Nadel concludes that the assimilation will not, however, be complete until there is intermarriage with the Arab.

I would commend his advice that rule through native administrations must envisage gradual and guided readjustment, in the absence of which there must be a danger of reaction. To produce a federation of the Nuba on a sound and lasting basis, we must create a community of interest among the Nuba. This he advises us to build up deliberately by 'education in its widest sense' and by propaganda. The reader should consider carefully his suggestion that the way to achieve this end is to teach tribal history modified by modern moral values. Hitherto traditional Nuba morality has been bounded by the small community; but we want it to embrace the whole tribe and then the whole community: and our teaching should therefore aim at the gradual disappearance of 'self-help' and the recognition of an all-embracing law. Dr. Nadel would divorce such moral education from religion, but he suggests that the two great religions with which the Nuba come in contact have each a lesson for them: Islam teaches the unity of all who embrace the faith, the unity of a nascent nationalism, while Christianity can teach the brotherhood of mankind.

In conclusion, I would suggest that the value of this survey is not

confined to the Nuba; but I would commend it to the consideration of all thinking Sudanese. The Nuba, who have hitherto preserved untouched in their mountain fastnesses so much of their ancestral traditions are no doubt historically a cross-section of the tribes who used once to inhabit the vast surrounding plains, and whose blood still flows often unrecognized in the veins of very many Sudanese. There is much in the customs of the Nuba, particularly in the sphere of marriage and family life, that is common to much of the rest of the Sudan. Much, though not all of it is admirable, while it is being increasingly realized in these latter days that Western civilization is not founded on the epitome of wisdom. Western civilization places too high a value on wealth as an end in itself. The cry of the Nuba farmer to Dr. Nadel, 'Everything that the Government has done is excellent except what they have done for our sons, who now think not of farm work, but of money', is not only poignant, but contains a warning that all should heed. The generosity for which the Sudanese are famous, and which at times seems to foreigners to exceed the bounds of prudence, no doubt has a common origin with the contempt for economics and in the customary dissipation of wealth which is found among the Nuba. The Sudanese in general too have a world-wide reputation for the manliness which is a characteristic of the Nuba. Let them not abandon these valuable traits handed down to them from their ancestors in a blind assimilation of the outward form of the apparently higher civilization of the West. May the new Gordon College produce men who will think and so provide their country with wise leadership in the future. This book should not be regarded as the end, but as a beginning. Dr. Nadel stresses the need for constant planning for the future. No culture is static. It must be watched and studied sympathetically in order that it may not drift haphazardly, but be steered purposively towards a higher goal. This steering will in the future become more and more the concern of the Sudanese themselves. More such sympathetic studies of the people of the Sudan are needed, and may it not be very long before there are Sudanese capable of undertaking these studies themselves.

KHARTOUM
30 *June* 1946

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Nuba Peoples

THE Nuba Mountains, or Nuba Jebels, as they are called on maps, cover an area of roughly 30,000 square miles, and are situated in the centre and south of Kordofan, between Lat. 29° and 31° W. and Long. 10° and 12° 30′ N. They form an irregular, broken pattern of long mountain ranges, squat massifs and rugged rocks, separated by broad valleys and stretches of plain. They are bounded to the east west and north by the semi-arid thin bush country typical of the Sudan in this latitude, and reach in the south almost to the marches of the Nile valley. The hill country itself is well watered; springs, wells and waterholes are found both within the mountain ranges and at the foot of the hills. It also has a much richer vegetation and is more densely wooded than the surrounding plains, although intensive cultivation of the hillsides has resulted in considerable de-forestation, most marked in the neighbourhood of settlements. The hills vary greatly in height and formation, low rocky chains, often little more than stony excrescences, alternating with high, compact massifs or isolated hills rising abruptly from the plain.

The people of the Nuba Mountains no less than their environment are marked off from the surrounding areas and the groups inhabiting them. They represent a human enclave of aboriginal Negro stock encircled by groups of Arabs and hamitic (or semi-hamitic) Nilotes. Professor Seligman classed the Nuba peoples, together with the hill groups of Fung Province, as a 'sub-racial unit', which appears to extend westward into Darfur and possibly beyond, into Nigeria and the Gold Coast.[1] The general character of this racial classification must not be minimized. The Nuba peoples appear as a racial unit (or sub-unit) when compared, on the basis of physiological measurements, with those other large racial divisions. Considered by themselves, they present a far from homogeneous or pure racial unit; even apart from the admixture of Arab or hamitic blood, they show in large measure the presence of divergent physical characteristics, which suggests several component sub-racial strains.[2]

If we leave aside physical characteristics and turn to ethnic divisions, the internal differentiation becomes even more marked. The total population of the Nuba tribes appears to be in the vicinity of 300,000; it is sub-divided in over fifty different ethnic groups—tribes and tribal

[1] C. G. Seligman, *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, 1932, p. 15.

[2] The lack of data on the physical anthropology of the Nuba does not admit of a more detailed statement. Anthropometric investigations have so far been carried out—on a small scale—only among groups in the extreme south and north of the Nuba Hills.

sections—every hill almost possessing a people conscious of its separateness and ethnic individuality. Their size varies to an almost bewildering degree. We find large groups like the Moro and Otoro, with populations between 20,000 and 40,000, and then again very small groups like Tullishi, with a population of 3,500, Tima with 1,800, or Tabak with under 1,000 souls.[1]

Among the Arabs as (at least to-day) among themselves the Negro groups of the Nuba Mountains are known by the collective name Nuba. I will not attempt to trace the origin of this name or to speculate on its original meaning. Suffice to say that in none of the groups which I have studied is the term Nuba indigenous, or for that matter clearly defined, although it is nowadays in use everywhere, largely, I imagine, under the influence of the accepted Government nomenclature. This does not mean that no concept expressing the racial or ethnic unity of these Negro hillmen *vis-à-vis* Arabs or Nilotic tribes exists. But it is both more vague and more narrow than the concept implied in the name Nuba. The Nuba groups refer to the racial or ethnic unit to which they belong by the term 'Hill peoples' (e.g. in Otoro or Moro) or 'Black peoples' (in Heiban). The range of this concept is determined by the concrete experience and knowledge of a particular group rather than any general conception of racial differences and distribution. Thus the people of a certain tribe will describe all similar groups of which they know or with which they come in contact as being of their own 'race' of Hill peoples or Black peoples (or Nuba), but would be uncertain into which category to place other groups, outside their ken. The peoples of Shatt (who, incidentally, are immigrants of Daju origin from Darfur) told me that they were 'Nuba', as were the peoples of Kadugli, Moro and Talodi; they denied that there were any Nuba living north of Kadugli. In the opinion of a Korongo man, again, all the surrounding tribes were 'Nuba', but not the people of Dilling, whom he believed to be Arabs. The people of Dilling and Nyima, on the other hand, who are widely travelled and number many ex-soldiers and policemen among them, are well aware of the extent of the Nuba groups in Kordofan. Once or twice I even heard the Dinka referred to as 'Nuba'.

Language and Culture

To the racial and ethnic diversity we must add a far-reaching linguistic differentiation. It has been said that there are as many Nuba languages as there are hills. This is but a slight exaggeration. Students of the Nuba language have reduced this bewildering complexity to certain comprehensive categories. According to their findings the languages spoken in the Nuba Hills fall in three large classes: languages of Sudanic type, of Bantoid type, and of Nubian type. To give a few examples: Nyima and Korongo are instances of the first, Heiban, Otoro, and Tira of the second,

[1] No exact population statistics are available. The figures quoted here are based on poll tax returns, the figures for the total population being arrived at by multiplying the number of tax-payers (i.e. adult men) by five.

and Dilling and Kaduru of the third type.[1] These large-scale categories have been further sub-divided in a number of language groups, ten in all, comprising related dialects.[2]

From the viewpoint of the student of society, these linguistic categories are of very unequal significance, and may even be misleading. For they comprise both systematic, as it were, theoretical, affinities and differences which, though evident to the student of language, play no part in the social life of the people, and affinities and differences which are directly observable and concretely affect social intercourse. It is not easy to outline in a limited space these greatly varying linguistic relations. While some groups speak merely dialects of the same language (e.g. Otoro, Heiban and Lera), the affinities between other languages are limited to a common grammar and a fleeting similarity in their vocabulary (e.g. Korongo and Tullishi). Again, some groups, living in close contact or possessing traditions of such contacts in the past, are conscious of these linguistic affinities, and may indeed even exaggerate their importance (e.g. Dilling, Ghulfan, Kaduru, Wali, and Tabak), while others are quite unaware of the fact that their language (or a dialect of it) is spoken by some other tribe (e.g. Tira-Moro, and Korongo-Tullishi). The analysis of the linguistic situation in the Nuba Mountains goes beyond the scope of this book, and I have restricted myself to referring to linguistic affinities, so far as I could observe them, in the discussion of the various Nuba tribes.

The linguistic diversity of the Nuba Hills no doubt reflects the isolation in which most of the hill communities have lived perhaps for centuries, and the absence of any large-scale political unification. When this isolation has been broken down and intertribal contacts established (ancient or recent), the linguistic situation, too, has changed. Certain languages, essentially different in structure or vocabulary (such as Tira and Otoro or Mesakin and Korongo), possess a certain stock of common words—mostly terms referring to common cultural features which the two tribes must have acquired in mutual assimilation. Again, tribes or tribal sections have become bilingual as the result of intensive contacts—indeed, trilingual if we include the pervading Arab contacts and the coming *lingua franca*, 'Nuba-Arabic'.

More important than either racial or linguistic categories are to us here groupings based on the phenomena to the study of which this book is mainly devoted—culture and social structure. Let me state at once that, notwithstanding the racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity of the Nuba hill tribes, there exists something like a 'Nuba culture', a cultural make-up common to all the various groups. It does not pervade the whole cultural life of the groups; yet it goes deeper than merely a common system of livelihood—a cultural affinity that could be explained, in the common

[1] See Chart in Seligman, op. cit., p. 373.

[2] See P. A. and D. N. MacDiarmid, in *Sudan Notes and Records*, xiv, 1931, p. 179. This classification suffers, however, from the inadequate linguistic data on which it is based as well as from the author's unfamiliarity with the tribal distribution in the Nuba Mountains.

environment, as an adjustment of essentially dissimilar groups to identical conditions of life. These more comprehensive cultural affinities refer to such facts as clan-structure; features of the legal system; or the regulation of intertribal conflicts. To anticipate a few examples; in nearly all Nuba groups clan-membership entails eating restrictions between members of different clans; unavenged homicide is believed to bring leprosy upon the families of murderer and victim; and negotiations between warring tribes are entrusted to an inviolable emissary usually known as the Chief of the Path.[1]

This common 'Nuba culture' amounts only to a common foundation; it detracts nothing from the varied cultural life of the Nuba hill tribes. Upon it social and cultural structures of marked individuality are erected which, in all other provinces of life, may have little or nothing in common. The lines of cultural division do not invariably coincide with tribal boundaries. More often they demarcate much larger units—groups of tribes possessing a closely similar culture. But on a smaller scale the single tribe, even the tribal section, may present yet other features of cultural individuality and differentiation which mark it off from other groups of the same order. Visualize, then, the cultural map of the Nuba Mountains: a sweeping outline, first, defining the area of Nuba culture at large; within, smaller areas, describing the groups of tribes of common or closely related culture; within these areas again, narrow circles, to account for cultural variations between tribe and tribe, or tribal section and tribal section.

Nowhere are these boundaries either rigid or uniform. Nor can they be identified with the boundaries of racial or linguistic groups. Nor yet do these cultural groups invariably occupy a contiguous area or admit of a historical interpretation in this sense, i.e. the derivation of the present cultural relationship from common origins and past migrations. Such a derivation is possible in one or two cases only, as for the Moro and Tira, or the people of Kaduiu and Dilling. In the majority of cases it would be sheer speculation to try and establish a historical basis for the existing cultural constellation.

History and Migrations

We know little about the ancient history of the Nuba tribes. A few rock-paintings in widely scattered places (in Koalib country and one or two other hills), about which the people living there can give no information, and which they could never have produced, suggest an older population which preceded the present inhabitants. The discovery, by Mr. A. J. Arkell, of a grave in the Tira hills, in which the body was buried in a contracted position, suggests the same: for this method of burial is now unknown anywhere in the Nuba Mountains.

The traditions and memories of the peoples themselves yield sparse

[1] The question whether this common 'Nuba culture' may not have affinities with tribes and races outside our area is beyond the compass of this investigation.

information. It often seems as if historical traditions had been cut short by the overpowering experience of the Mahdist régime (1881-1898), which must have severed all links with a more distant—and possibly less disturbed —past. In some tribes the tradition of past movements or previous places of settlement are summarized in one sentence: 'We have always lived here.' Other tribes have more definite and more illuminating traditions, which may even be supported by objective evidence. Thus the Daju of Western Kordofan trace their origin to Dar Sila, where there are still Daju living, and occasional visits between mother-country and 'colony' keep the knowledge of the common origin alive. Or the Tira mention the Moro hills as their original home, and are borne out in this by the Moro themselves who recollect an early Tira settlement on one of their hills. With one exception all these traditions of migrations refer to movements from (roughly) west to east. The Daju, as just mentioned, came from the west to their present settlements in Kordofan; the people of Shatt south of Kadugli, a branch of the Daju—speaking their language and practising their culture—have emigrated from Darfur and reached their present home from the Nile valley, where they had established a first colony near Malakal. The Tira moved eastward from Moro. The Nyima claim to have come from Kugya near El Odaya. The one exception are the people of Dilling and their tribal relations, the people of Kaduru and Tabak; the Dilling people regard the Ghadayat (Jebel El Ein) as their original home, while the inhabitants of Kaduru (or rather one section) and Jebel Tabak trace their origin to the ancient Fung Kingdom in the east.

Pressure and attacks by other groups or scarcity of food and land are said to have been the causes of these migrations. It is impossible to define more closely the time-factor in the Nuba 'age of migrations'—if indeed we can speak of an 'age of migration'. For the traditions of migrations in the various tribes do not point to the same period. The Daju place their migration six to seven generations back; the people of Tabak and Dilling ten generations, the Nyima twelve to thirteen, and the Tira three to four generations.

The wanderings of the Nuba tribes have not stopped entirely. Although migration of whole tribes no longer occurred during the last generation, small sections have frequently detached themselves from the mother-tribe, even in the last few years, and moved to other areas, mostly in search of better land. The new-won security and freedom of movement under the *pax Britannica* has proved an added stimulus to this tribal expansion.

Most of these migrations, ancient or modern, were on a very small scale, involving movements over comparatively short distances, frequently within the range of the Nuba Mountains. They shed no light on the question of the original home of the Nuba peoples, nor do they supply information as to when and how this area became the habitat of its large and varied population. Evidence of a different kind, however, allows us to answer at least part of the latter question—namely, why the population is concentrated on and around the hills rather than in the plains and

valleys. Both environment and history supply the reasons: hills and hillsides offer the only sites with perennial water supply in a poorly watered country; and the fastness of hills and hillsides alone offered protection to the badly armed primitive Nuba groups from the attacks of the Dervish troops during the Mahdist régime. Low stone walls thrown across the flanks of hills as in Daju and Kamdang, or rocks piled up in the gaps of mountain passes as in Tullishi and Otoro, were additional defences against raiders mounted and equipped with firearms. There is also evidence to show that tribes like the Tira and Moro, who were living up in the hills at the time of the British conquest, have originally lived near the foot of the hills, and have moved to the top and the upper reaches of the hillsides only under the threat of Arab attacks. Yet again it is impossible to generalize. For other tribes, e.g. the Otoro, maintain that they have always lived on their present site, the high-lying mountain valleys and plateaus.[1]

During the early years of British rule certain bellicose and recalcitrant tribes were forced, in the interest of public security, to leave their hill fortresses and move to settlements down in the valleys. Most of these groups have since been allowed to return to their old hill settlements. They may not have taken very kindly to their enforced migration. Clearly, it not only meant surrendering their strong natural defences which had so long protected their independence and autonomy, but it also involved a sharp break in their accustomed mode of life. Occasionally an unfortunate misunderstanding aggravated the situation, as when the Tira were made to move down to a low hillock of which their traditions spoke as an unhealthy disease-ridden site, which had once already been abandoned by their ancestors. Here and there the enforced migration also involved a difficult spiritual readjustment: for it might separate the congregation from the centres of their worship and the houses of their priest, which were situated high up in the hills. Yet in other cases this separation has been the result of voluntary emigrations, when a tribe changed its settlements down in the valley for the better protected mountain side. Moro is a case in point; here the hut of a certain clan-priest, which harbours a sacred 'rain-stone' (a meteorite, apparently) is still situated at the foot of Lebu hill while the population of Lebu has been living, since the time of the Mahdist wars, up on the plateau.

It is tempting to speculate on the psychological readjustment which these changes of locality must have entailed: a religion based on the presence of sacred places and centres of worship in the midst of the people, suddenly turned into a cult whose shrines, far away from the scenes of daily life, become remote objects and sites of pilgrimage. Yet the religious readjustment no less than the other forms of readjustment involved in the re-settlement of the population were apparently easily

[1] Here and in the following such phrases as 'British rule,' 'British conquest' or 'pre-British' are intended to refer to the Anglo-Egyptian régime, in which British policy and influence predominated.

effected. Certain tribes which had originally been moved down by the Government have not availed themselves of the subsequent permission to return to their old settlements (e.g. Tira). Other tribes or tribal sections, again, have in recent years begun to descend into the valley and move out into the plains to be nearer their new extensive cultivations. This happened, and is happening, spontaneously in several tribes, e.g. Otoro (the eastern section), Moro, Koalib, Tabak, Kamdang, and Dilling. It is safe to predict that in a generation or two the majority of the Nuba tribes will be living in or close to the plain; the economic motive to-day, as in times past the motive of security and self-protection, is overruling all other considerations, even considerations as deeply rooted as religious beliefs or crucial facts of social structure.

Plan of Study

This book is the result of over two years' fieldwork in the Nuba Mountains, carried out on behalf and in the employ of the Sudan Government, in tribes about which little or nothing is known.[1] From their large number only comparatively few, ten in all, could be selected for anthropological investigation: Heiban, Otoro, Tira, Moro, Korongo, Mesakin, Tullishi, Koalib, Nyima, Dilling. Their selection, based on the available material and a short preliminary survey, was made with a view to finding typical, representative examples of Nuba tribes. Tribes whose administration presented imperative problems were considered before others.[2]

Even in this limited field only three tribes, Heiban, Otoro and Tira, could be studied with the completeness which modern anthropology rightly demands from its field workers, above all, in a study ranging over the full year's cycle. The propinquity of the three tribes, which live practically side by side, their close contacts and co-operation in many walks of life, made this combined study possible. To each of the remaining groups I could devote only an average period of two months. Short though this period was, the knowledge of certain general cultural facts common to all Nuba groups which I had acquired in the study of the first three tribes, and also the limitation of this investigation primarily to the study of social organization, enabled me to carry out what would otherwise have been an impossible task.

The unequal length of the field-study, the unequal depth to which the analysis could penetrate in the different groups, created certain difficulties

[1] The late Professor C. G. Seligman studied the southernmost Nuba groups, of Iliri and Talodi. Descriptions of customs and ceremonies of some of the other tribes, of very unequal value, appeared at various times in *Sudan Notes and Records*.

[2] I hope to publish separately brief notes on certain other, mostly very small groups, to which I paid short visits. They are: Kamdang, Daju, Tima, Miri, Tabak, and Kao-Nyaro; a study of the hill tribes of Kadaru appeared in *Sudan Notes and Records*, vol. xxv, i, 1942. Some of these tribes are culturally akin to those dealt with in this book, or show significant cultural variations; in the interest of comparison a fleeting reference to one or the other of these groups may thus be permitted.

in the presentation of the material. I have tried to overcome them by concentrating in the present account on those aspects of culture which I have studied with an equal degree of completeness in all the different groups—that is, their social and economic structure. In primitive societies religion and magic pervade every domain of social life, and it would indeed be an incomplete analysis which would ignore this paramount aspect. So far as it proved essential to the understanding of the social system, it has been included in the present account; but a separate, specific, study of Nuba religion must be left for another occasion. It will be understood that the method of presentation which I had to adopt must miss many cultural and psychological features or details of everyday life, which can reveal themselves only in a study embracing tribal life over a long period and in all its aspects.

This book falls to some extent in the category of 'applied anthropology': its primary purpose is to provide an anthropological study which should prove helpful in the practical tasks of government. The arrangement of the book already allows for that. It will be seen that each tribal chapter deals with the same subjects, largely in the same order, so as to make them easy to consult, in the manner of chapters of a handbook. But this is in no way a handbook: it aims at much more than mere description—at analysis and casual explanation; it deals with the different tribes and their changing institutions, not as so many disconnected topics, but as steps in a gradual, often comparative, investigation. Overlapping and repetition are thus unavoidable. It is unavoidable, too, that the earlier chapters, in which these institutions are first encountered, should also contain their first analysis, and thus provide the foundation for subsequent discussions. For the understanding of Marriage, Political System, and Law, specially, it is essential to study the account in Chapters III and IV before turning to the corresponding sections in the other tribal chapters. The practical bias of this book does not, in my view, preclude or overrule strictly scientific standards. On the contrary, only the most careful scientific examination can justify the adoption of anthropological data as a basis for practical decisions of so far-reaching consequence.

Nor do the practical aims exclude, by some simple, persuasive criterion, this or that aspect of primitive culture as immaterial, and as of merely academic interest. In societies whose structure is unknown, in societies, moreover, which are being subjected to new, alien influences of again unknown effectiveness, there are no immaterial aspects: any cultural feature may reveal itself as vital under the impact of some new, unpredictable change. Or its significance may be indirect: a social usage which in itself might appear to be of purely theoretical interest may so mould motives and moral evaluations that the reaction of the people, say, towards modern law or educational ideas would be wholly determined by it. I am thinking in particular of one aspect of primitive society which is often regarded as a topic *par excellence* of 'theoretical anthropology'—kinship structure and terminology. I will admit that I had doubts whether or

not to include it in this book. But the arguments just set forth seemed decisive.[1]

Still certain difficulties of presentation remained, due to the rich diversity of Nuba culture. Modern anthropology tends towards monographic descriptions of single groups, as only a comprehensive analysis of this kind can demonstrate satisfactorily the interaction and causal interdependence of cultural factors. In our case, practical reasons spoke against such a treatment, which would involve countless repetitions and cross-references, especially where the material suggested a comparative analysis over and above the descriptive accounts. A comprehensive analysis of Nuba culture on a comparative basis was equally ruled out, as it would blur the picture of individual tribes and cultures. The cultural constellation typical of the Nuba Mountains suggested a feasible compromise: to place the various tribes in larger groups in accordance with their cultural affinities, and to treat each cultural group—or 'cultural area'—separately.

The complex pattern of culture in the Nuba Mountains in which affinities and diversities appear so closely interlocked, precludes a sharp division, admitting of no overlapping, into groups whose cultural make-up would differ in every detail. The main problem, then, was to find satisfactory criteria on which to base this division, criteria, that is, which would do justice to the essential, pivotal, facts in the different cultural groups. I decided to adopt the following three criteria:

(1) Kinship structure, more particularly, the system of reckoning descent in paternal or maternal line.

(2) The nature of the clan organization—presence or absence of a strong, all-pervading clan system of a 'symbiotic' type.[2]

(3) The presence or absence of a certain shamanistic spirit-possession cult.[3]

Although this division into cultural groups was in a large measure the result of practical considerations and although our three criteria are derived from very different provinces of social life, criteria and division should not be thought arbitrary. Two reasons decided the selection of our criteria: first, their pivotal significance in the social life of the groups, and, second, the fact that they do not appear combined at random, but occur in certain regular correlations. Thus matrilineal descent and 'symbiotic' clan structure appear to be mutually exclusive; so do matrilineal descent and the shamanistic possession cult. The relation between 'symbiotic' clan structure and shamanism is not as clearly defined; the two traits are mutually

[1] A fuller statement on my methods of fieldwork as well as my interpretation of the tasks of 'applied anthropology' will be found in the Introduction to my book, *A Black Byzantium*, Oxford University Press, 1942, second edn., 1946.

[2] By 'symbiotic' I understand a form of social segmentation (more especially clan-structure) in which every section, as a section, assumes certain specific duties (religious or political) on behalf of the community at large. *See* my article on Social Symbiosis and Tribal Organization, in *Man*, 1938, 85.

[3] For the definition of Shamanism *see* Chapter XI, also *Sudan Notes and Records*, vol. xxiv, 1941.

exclusive in two of the three groups in this category (Koalib, Nyima), while in the third (Dilling) the shamanistic cult appears even vested in the 'symbiotic' clan structure.

We arrive thus at the following four groups of tribes (see diagram on p. 11):

(1) Otoro—Heiban: patrilineal descent, simple clan structure, no shamanism.

(2) Tira—Moro: patrilineal descent, 'symbiotic' clan structure, no shamanism.

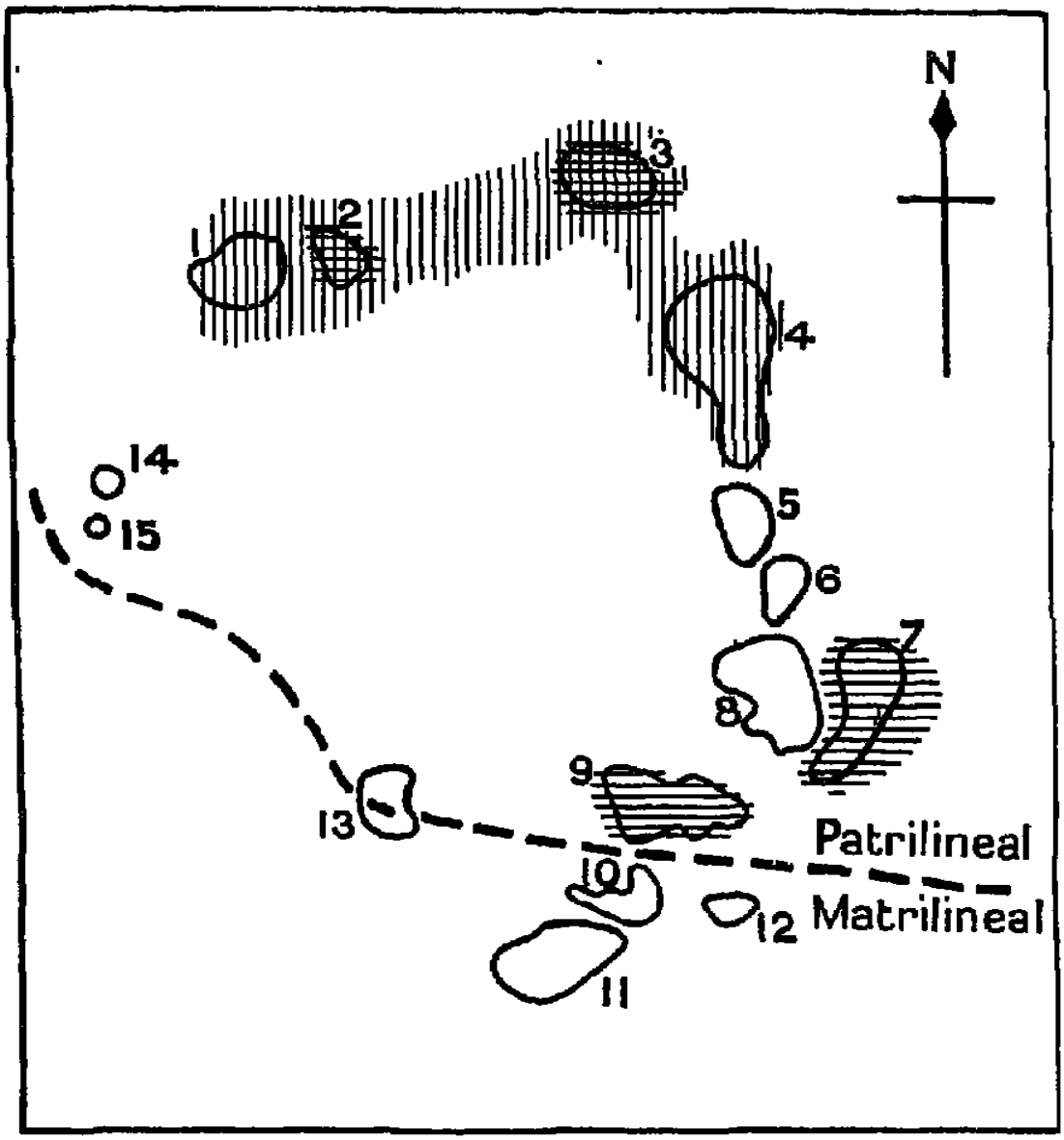
(3) Korongo—Mesakin—Tullishi: matrilineal descent, simple clan structure, no shamanism.

(4) Koalib—Nyima—Dilling: patrilineal descent, shamanism, both types of clan structure.

Certain aspects of culture, however, still demanded treatment on a comprehensive comparative basis—namely, the economic system and the system of land tenure: as mentioned already, they belong, with insignificant variations, to the stratum of a common Nuba culture. The same comparative treatment has also been applied in the concluding chapters of the book, which are intended to summarize the results from the viewpoints of a common political administration, and the common future of Nuba culture under the impact of Arab civilization. Indeed, the significance of this concluding discussion points beyond the more specific question of a 'Nuba policy', to issues common wherever a modern government is being erected upon the foundations of an indigenous society, and wherever primitive cultures have experienced contacts with different, and higher, forms of civilization.

Let me in conclusion remove a certain misconception that may have arisen. Our grouping together of individual societies in larger units, based on a certain commonness of cultural features, does not imply a splitting up of culture into independent traits. The fact that culture traits occur in varying degrees of similarity or diversity in a number of societies does not turn the latter into mere conglomerates of interchangeable traits. Cultures are consistent and coherent wholes—'functional' wholes in modern terminology; cultural facts, for all their ubiquity, form part of a solid edifice in which all elements are interrelated and interdependent, much as are structural features in an edifice of steel and stone. In both there are degrees of functional significance—changes in one element may involve a narrower or wider range of changes in all other elements. The criteria we adopted—our 'pivotal' traits—represent elements commanding the widest range of functional interdependence. Thus, though concentrating on cultural groups, we shall not be neglecting the functional nature of societies and their unique, coherent pattern of interlocked elements. But we shall be able, at the same time, to study the component elements in variation and so to test their functional significance against the main instrument of scientific analysis comparison.

DIAGRAM OF NUBA MOUNTAINS



Definitions

It may be useful, before embarking on our analysis of the various Nuba tribes, to define certain basic concepts of primitive social organization with which we shall be dealing throughout this book. There is, first, the concept of the *clan*. The clan is an institutionalized group based on unilineal descent, i.e. a group in which membership is hereditary in one line of ancestors—the father's or mother's line. Both types of clans (*patrilineal* and *matrilineal* clans) occur in the Nuba tribes. The Nuba

clan is invariably, though not always strictly, exogamous, marriage within the clan being forbidden. Clan membership represents a systematic and unequivocal social alignment. It assigns to the individual his share in the corporate rights and obligations of the clan and, through the clan, his place in the wider order of the tribe. Thus clans have names and other emblems of their collective unity which the individual will assume, and entail rules of conduct varying from clan to clan. The lines of descent of all individuals in the clan are rarely traced back to a common first ancestor and semi-mythical founder of the group whom one can name; more commonly, his existence is merely assumed, and the clan pedigree stops short after a few generations of well-remembered, concrete ancestors. The clans in one tribe are never conceived of as completely separate, disconnected units; rather does it form part of the clan-concept that the clans represent segments, well defined and often interdependent sub-units, of the larger social whole, the tribe.

Frequently we shall be forced to distinguish between the 'theoretical' clan and sections within it, on which essential clan rights and obligations devolve. Here the clan section rather than the clan at large appears (at least in specific spheres of life) as the effective social unit. The term 'section' is on purpose fluid: but so are the principles from which this sub-division is derived. They may lie in the more intensive familiarity of local groups; in ties of common descent less remote than those implied in the theoretical clan; or merely in the tendency to reduce too extensive a unit to more workable proportions.

Sometimes the sub-division of clans is more rigid, more sharply defined, and derived from less variable criteria. Here we shall speak of *sub-clans*.

A final grouping based on descent is the *kindred*, by which term we mean the ramifications of the biological family. The kindred thus embraces both lines of descent, with all the agnatic and collateral links. We also include in-law relationships in this term. These are normally excluded from the 'kindred'—on insufficient grounds; for in-law relationships in one generation become agnatic and cognatic relationships in the next, and no picture of kinship can be complete without the perspective of successive generations. The biological range of the kindred is of necessity indefinite; its sociological delimitation, i.e. the range within which the biological grouping has social effectiveness, is often equally vague, the degrees of kinship which 'count' shading over to degrees which are sociologically irrelevant. The social range and inclusiveness of the kindred moreover varies from tribe to tribe, and can be established only by the study of the concrete case.

The widest social unit, the tribe, is more difficult to define.[1] Most Nuba tribes bear, as an external stamp of unity, collective names, which embrace

[1] A more detailed sociological analysis of the concept of the tribe and of related group-concepts (people, nation) will be found in my book, *A Black Byzantium*, Chapter II. The deductions made there are fully borne out by the present investigation.

all sections of the tribe; but in a few groups tribal consciousness is not intensive or clear enough to have evolved a common tribal name which the group itself would use, though the group would be known by such name to its neighbours. The consciousness of unity, of varying intensity, must be the basis of the definition of the tribe. What is described as 'tribes' in this book are groups which conceive of themselves as units, which speak of their members as being 'like brothers', and of their component sections as being, ultimately, 'one'. We cannot go beyond these fluid, subjective categories. They have no exact counterpart in concrete evidence: we shall see that neither common origin nor geographical unity, nor yet internal co-operation contribute to their meaning. Language and culture may seem to constitute more significant criteria. For the consciousness of tribal 'one-ness' is invariably expressed in terms of cultural identity and diversity. The people of the tribe see themselves as a group possessed of identical, and even unique, culture, and separated from other, similarly organized groups by dissimilarity of custom. But more often than not the anthropological evidence fails to support these claims. We shall meet with groups which, though they are close neighbours and possess an almost identical language and culture, do not regard themselves as one tribe (e.g. Heiban, Abol, Laro); and we shall also meet with tribes which claim this unity regardless of internal cultural differentiation (Otoro, Moro). Cultural and linguistic uniformity, then, does not imply, and cultural and linguistic diversity—at least within certain limits—not preclude, the recognition of tribal unity.[1] It is, in fact, easy to see that culture and language cannot provide infallible criteria of tribal identity; for culture and language admit of degrees and shades of uniformity or diversity: while the tribal concept tends towards a sharper crystallization—one either is, or is not, a member of the tribe. The tribal concept thus hinges on a *theory* of cultural identity, which ignores or dismisses as immaterial existing variations, and ignores or disregards uniformities beyond its self-chosen boundaries. The tribe exists, not in virtue of any objective unity or likeness, but in virtue of an ideological unity, and a likeness accepted as a dogma.

This uniformity attains a more convincing reality only in one domain of material culture—in personal accoutrements. They belong to the surface of cultural life, where social unity is reflected, not constituted: their significance is that of emblems of group membership, as it were, of a tribal uniform. Different tribes use different weapons or shields of characteristically varying design; they arrange their hair in different fashion, and—specially the women—wear different kinds of dress. But even this external uniformity and diversity is not preserved very faithfully;

[1] The point beyond which cultural differentiation would prevent the acceptance of tribal 'one-ness', it is not easy to define. As we shall see presently, tribes may emerge from the coalescence of heterogeneous groups, and even comparatively deep cultural differences may be smoothed out or absorbed in the course of time. Nor need linguistic differences constitute more than a temporary barrier; for originally alien sections may become bilingual (e.g. the Otoro sections of Tira origin).

for tribes borrow each other's weapons or imitate each other's fashions of dress.

Historically, the fluid, ideological identity of the tribe is most probably always derived from some past identity of more complete and concrete order—the conformity of conduct of small groups living in close co-operation. One turns into the other in the course of the twofold process of expansion and coalescence. Branches and split-off sections of the original community will transfer the memory of common origin to the plane of a more abstract 'belonging together', as it is embodied in the tribal concept. And a new, alien, group which associated itself with the original community and adopted its ways might itself come to be regarded as an additional component group. The various Nuba tribes show varying stages of this evolution, though traces of it are to-day visible everywhere. Co-operation and common origin, then, disappear in the final concept of the tribe; its antecedent stages are discernible only in vague tribal nomenclatures and vaguer tribal traditions. It seems significant that none of the Nuba groups has a word for 'tribe', although they all have terms for village, hill community, and clan. These three concepts can be defined, concretely, by reference to some other entity —habitation, locality, or descent. 'Tribe' could be defined only tautologically, as a group which is itself.

The practical implications of this theory of the tribe are obvious. As tribes have arisen in the past, so they (or similar units—peoples and nations) may arise again in the future. What appear as different groups to-day may well fuse into larger units in times to come. The tribal map of the Nuba Mountains will remain fluid, but the phases of this change are imperceptible and its final limits beyond the orbit of our time-bound investigation.

I may be allowed to conclude on a personal note. This book was written in the Sudan, during the war. The conditions of work then, and military service afterwards (which only terminated when the book had already reached proof stage), made it impossible for me to consult books and periodicals, or to refer to (or join in) recent anthropological discussions. If *force majeure* was responsible for these omissions, they are omissions none the less, and no one can be more sensible of this than the author.

Note on spelling. I have endeavoured throughout the book to reduce so far as possible the use of uncommon symbols. Only the following have been adopted: ŋ (as *ng* in 'sing'); ž (as *s* in 'lesion'); dh (as *th* in 'there'); th (as *th* in 'thought'); and ö (for the diphthong *œ*). The spelling of geographical names conforms largely to that found on Sudan Government maps.

Currency. Money values are quoted in the currency of the country, i.e. Egyptian pounds (which correspond roughly to pounds Sterling) and piastres (100 piastres to the pound).

CHAPTER II

ECONOMIC LIFE

THE main means of livelihood in the Nuba Mountains is agriculture. Animal husbandry and hunting, though well-organized and common everywhere, play only a secondary part. Handicrafts are of little importance; the handicrafts of the men, more especially, like blacksmith work, weaving or wood-carving, are mostly of recent origin and limited to a few individuals in tribes which adopted these crafts from their more advanced neighbours, Arabs or Daju. Every Nuba man and woman is, first and foremost, a farmer. Proficiency in farming is the hallmark of the valuable member of the community. We shall see that even in professions far removed from agriculture, such as that of a spirit-possessed tribal priest, farming ability is a necessary qualification for public recognition. Occasionally you meet a man who has no interest in farming and prefers the less monotonous life of a hunter and wanderer; but he is the exception and is regarded almost as a freak by his fellow tribesmen.

Agricultural Technique

The Nuba tribes practise what is generally known as 'hoe-cultivation'. The term 'hoe' is slightly misleading, for the tool which the Nuba farmer uses is more akin to a spade than a hoe proper—that is to say, blade and handle are in the same plane and not—as in the hoe—at an angle to each other. Moreover, the tool is driven into the ground at a fairly sharp angle, so as to scratch the surface soil, and is not swung down perpendicularly from above. A more properly hoe-shaped tool is used for clearing farm plots and digging up grain stalks. To-day standard iron blades, bought in markets and stores, have largely replaced the old wooden hoe-blades. The latter are still used, however, in many parts (Koalib, Tira, Otoro, Korongo, Mesakin) side by side with the iron blades, specially for work in heavy cotton soil or stony ground, where the thin iron blades would not live long. Pointed wooden 'digging-sticks are also still in use for weeding on the narrow, stony terrace cultivations. On light, sandy soil many tribes use a special kind of 'hoe', with a tall handle, up to 9–10 ft. long, for scratching the seed holes previous to sowing. The advantage of the long handle seems to be that in this light surface work it enables the cultivator to cover a large area very quickly simply by shortening or lengthening the handle, without having to move his position.

The differences in agricultural implements are not completely reducible to differences in the nature of the soil or the tasks for which the tools are intended. Like other differences in material culture, in pottery, or in the shape of baskets or granaries, certain differences in farming tools must

be placed on the account of cultural diversity: the long-handled hoe is unknown in the southern and western Nuba groups; here some tribes use a hoe with a handle 3–4 ft. long, while others prefer a very short handle, often only a foot long. The customary use of different types of tools involves a difference in the habitual working motions: the cultivator who uses the long hoe is used to stand up and lean against the tall handle; the cultivator who works with a short hoe will cower or kneel down while moving his tool forward and backward. It is interesting to note that these motor habits may as such form part of the different cultural make-up of groups; motor habits may differ even where the tools used are the same, and in tribes which are close neighbours in the same type of country. Thus the Otoro go down on one knee, while the Tira, who use the same type of hoe, are wont to work in a squatting posture.

With regard to the more essential features of agricultural technique, however, we may say that here differences in farming methods closely reflect differences in environmental conditions. In the discussion of Nuba cultivation we must thus bear in mind the two main types of environment in which the people live and to which they have adjusted their agricultural methods. One is the country of high massifs and extensive mountain ranges enclosing large tracts of arable land; the other the country of low hill chains and bare rocks, which offer little scope for cultivation on the hills themselves. In the mountainous country we find three main types of farmland: they are known in most parts as 'house farms', 'hillside farms', and 'far farms'.[1] Both house farms, situated close to the homesteads, and hillside farms, situated on the uninhabited slopes or in high-lying valleys, are terraced. The far farms, as their name indicates, are situated at a great distance from the settlement, far out in the plain. In the low hill country these three types of farmland change their appearance: house farms are terraced only where the homesteads are built on the mountainside, on spurs of hills, etc.; the hillside farms are replaced by cultivations laid out on level ground in the vicinity of the settlement, or they disappear altogether, being absorbed in the far farms, which are again situated far out in the plain.

The far farms in the plain represent a comparatively recent form of cultivation, not more than twenty years old in many parts, and even less in some hills (e.g. Otoro, Tullishi or Nyima). Not until public security was finally established under British rule and raids by Arabs or neighbouring hill tribes had ceased, did the Nuba farmer feel safe out in the open, unprotected plain. Previously Nuba cultivation had been limited to two types of farms, house farms and hillside farms—or, in low hill country, farms in the plain close to the hillside—the latter being regarded as the 'far farms' of that time. The traditional system is still followed by individual farmers—largely older men—on certain more primitive hills like Otoro, Moro, or Tullishi. In the most 'advanced' communities, on

[1] These terms represent literal translations of vernacular terms in use in most Nuba tribes.

the other hand, which, having first lived in the mountains, later moved into the plain, the three types of cultivation are again reduced to two, the hillside farms having given way to modern far farms. The change from (terraced) hillside farms to farms on level ground must involve changes both in agricultural technique (even in the tools used, as we have seen) and in the selection of crops for cultivation. We shall see that certain shortcomings which we can perceive to-day in the farming methods of many Nuba groups are due to an inadequate adjustment to the new conditions of plain-cultivation.

A fourth type of cultivation, laid out round the cattle camps, exists in certain tribes (Otoro, Tira, Tullishi) but is of little significance for the agricultural production of the group. Finally, most tribes also possess small irrigated plots, situated close to wells up in the hills or waterholes and river courses in the plain; they are watered by hand and used for the cultivation of tobacco and onions.

The different types of farmland are characterized by a different selection of crops. The house farm cultivation comprises maize, bullrush millet, light, early-maturing grain (*Andropogon sorghum*), and also as a rule a number of subsidiary food crops such as red pepper, melons, gourds, cucumber, *daraba* (okra), and—in the rains—tobacco; in the dry season the tobacco is transplanted to the irrigated plot mentioned above. On hillside farms we find heavy (late-maturing) grain and simsim (sesame—*Sesamum indicum*), also occasionally, on a piece of level ground, groundnuts. Cultivation in the plain, both on far farms proper and on land in the vicinity of the hillside, comprises grain, both light (a later maturing variety) and heavy, simsim, groundnuts and cotton. Beans are everywhere sown together with grain; in Dilling and Nyima simsim is both interplanted with grain and planted on separate plots.

The varieties of grain cultivated in the Nuba Mountains vary widely from group to group, largely corresponding to differences in the soil. On the light sandy soil of Kauda Valley, for example, light grain seems to do better than the heavier varieties, and the Otoro and Tira peoples who farm in this area are, in fact, concentrating more and more on the cultivation of light grain. In Heiban and the surrounding hills only light, early-maturing grain is grown. The southern tribes, Korongo, Mesakin, and Moro, whose farmland consists to a considerable extent of heavy cotton soil, have specialized in a very heavy grain called *kurgi*, which, incidentally, is said to be almost locust-proof. Dilling and Nyima cultivate an intermediate variety of grain, a little heavier than that grown in the eastern hills. The different varieties of grain show a different resistance in storage: the Korongo and Moro can keep their heavy grain for three years in storage, while in nearly all other tribes the grain is no longer considered fit for consumption after one year in the granary. Only the Nyima and Dilling peoples in the north can keep their grain for two years, i.e. two rainy seasons; they attribute its better resistance to its slightly heavier quality, though in my opinion it is due rather to

the less heavy rains in these parts, which do not cause the grain to deteriorate at the same rate as in the more southern hills.

In most tribes four to five different varieties of grain are known (apart from the main distinction of light and heavy grain). In the selection of the different varieties for cultivation, the people do not invariably consider systematically the quality of the soil or follow a fixed plan.[1] Often one finds stray plants of a different variety in a field otherwise uniformly planted. Or individual farmers will experiment with a certain (to them) new variety: a very tall type of early-maturing grain, for example, reputed to have come from Tira and known everywhere by the Tira name (*kyabya*), has made its appearance in Heiban; Tira farmers have in turn introduced the heavy *kurgi* from Moro; and farmers in Otoro and Heiban try from time to time, apparently with little success, to grow bullrush millet on their house farms. In Otoro, again, the seed grain of different varieties is not kept sufficiently well separated, and light and heavy grain frequently get mixed in the sowing. This experimenting and somewhat tentative attitude seems itself a phase in the gradual readjustment of the native farming methods to which I have referred before.

House farms are the smallest of the three types of farms; they vary in sizes between 400 and 600 sq. yds. The size of far farms varies much more widely in the different groups. For some tribes prefer large, compact land holdings in the plain (Mesakin, Korongo, Moro, Dilling, and to a lesser extent Tira) while others distribute their cultivation over several fairly small, scattered farms (Otoro, Heiban, Tullishi, Nyima). This preference for one or the other method of cultivation cannot be fully correlated with environmental or historical facts. It is true that the majority of groups preferring large, compact far farms live in low hill country and in settlements situated (at least to-day) close to the plain; but Moro is a striking exception, and only two of the four groups which have adopted the system of several scattered farms live on high hill massifs (Tullishi and Otoro) and still maintain hillside cultivations in addition to far farms in the plain.

I have measured far farms and hillside farms in Heiban, Otoro, Tira, and Dilling: far farms and hillside farms in Otoro measure between ½ and ⅝ acre; far farms in Tira and Heiban between 1 and 1½ acre—these figures refer to grain plots only; simsim and groundnut plots are very much smaller.

The land which a family can keep under cultivation must correspond to the size of the working group, above all (as we shall see) to the number of wives of the owner of the land. The total land holdings of an individual farmer with (say) two wives would amount to about 3 acres in Otoro and 3–4 acres in Heiban and Tira, distributed over four to six farms in Otoro, two to three farms in Heiban, and two farms in Tira. The single,

[1] Of ten Otoro farmers five grew all five varieties, three four varieties, and two only two varieties; of ten Tira farmers three grew all five varieties, three four varieties, one three, and three two varieties.

compact, farms of the Dilling people measure 4–5 acres. The figures bear out what might, in fact, be expected—that large, compact land holdings are more advantageous to work than small scattered plots.

To illustrate the selection and relative importance of the different crops in Nuba cultivation, I am quoting in the following the average farm produce (for 1938) of three farmers of approximately the same age and status from Heiban, Otoro, and Tira. It must be understood, however, that these figures are not representative of the whole of the Nuba Mountains; in Korongo and Moro, for example, owing largely to the better soil, the farm yield appears to be generally bigger.

	Heiban	*Otoro*	*Tira*
Age of farmer	30–35	40	35
Number of wives	1	1	1
Number of children	—	1	—
House farms	1	1	1
Hillside farms	—	4	—
Far farms	3	2	1
Maize	very little	2 baskets	4 baskets
Light grain	24 baskets	8 baskets	4 baskets
Heavy grain	—	12 baskets	6 baskets
Simsim	2 baskets	1 basket	2 baskets
Groundnuts	1 basket	3 baskets	—
Beans	2 baskets	1 basket	2 baskets
Cotton	—	—	2 sacks

The people count their yield of threshed grain in 'baskets' which correspond in Otoro and Heiban to a little less than ½ *ardeb*, i.e. approximately 160 lb., and in Tira to ⅓ *ardeb*. The figures quoted in the chart all refer to the Otoro-Heiban measure. The chart refers only to grain that is stored in the granaries; another two to three baskets of grain, which are not stored and thus not counted, are used for food in the interval between the reaping and the storing of grain (i.e. December-April).

The main fact which we can read from this chart is the existence of a certain balance between the different crops which a farmer may select for cultivation. The increased cultivation of one crop means a corresponding reduction in the cultivation of another. This choice with which the Nuba farmer is faced becomes most important when one of the crops involved is a commercial crop. Like the Tira cotton-planter in our chart, he must be prepared to sacrifice a proportion of his food crops for the sake of the commercial crop. We shall see later that the limits which are thus set to Nuba cultivation lie, above all, in the nature of the organization of labour in the Nuba Mountains.

House farms, being regularly manured, are kept permanently under cultivation. The manure is obtained from house refuse and goat and cattle dung. In some tribes, where goats and sheep are kept in the houses

throughout the year (e.g. Heiban and Dilling), the women collect the dung every morning together with the house refuse and ashes from the cooking hut. In the first few months of the rainy season, while the grain is still low, the manure is scattered every day over the house farms. When the grain is too high and the grass too thick for that, the manure is thrown on a small dung-heap outside the house to be used again before next year's planting. As soon as the grain is cut, goats and cattle are driven into the villages—even those on high mountain ranges—and let out on house farms and plots in the vicinity of the settlement. Four months later, when the farms are cleared preparatory to planting, the manure is collected, heaped out in little mounds all over the farm plots, and burned together with dead stalks and dry grass.

On hillside and far farms, which, if they are manured at all, benefit only very irregularly from this system of manuring, cultivation follows the system of shifting cultivation, admitting at the same time of a rudimentary rotation of crops.[1] To start with the latter: one of the few rules which the agricultural system of the Nuba possesses is that simsim and groundnuts must be planted on new land, i.e. virgin or fallow land, and replaced after one year by grain. Simsim plots are as a rule laid out on the side of the grain field, so that in the following year the grain cultivation can be easily extended over the new stretch. Grain itself is planted either as a second-year crop after groundnuts and simsim or as a first-year crop on virgin or fallow land. Grain is planted for as many years in succession as the field will bear it. Not until the crop shows signs of failing is the field abandoned and a new plot taken under cultivation. The abandoned field is left fallow for at least four to five years, but often for much longer, after which time the farmer may return to it. Cotton, finally, a new crop in Nuba country, shows the 'experimenting' phase most clearly. It is planted on new land for one or two years in succession (never for longer), according to whether the first yield appeared promising or not. It is succeeded by grain or simsim, or occasionally a period of fallow-lying.

Even disregarding the requirements of modern commercial crops like cotton, and speaking purely from the standpoint of the Nuba peoples, it must be said that this trial-and-error method which seems to rule their agricultural system is extremely wasteful both as regards labour and yield. The comparison of the yield of long-worked farms with the yield of new farms shows that cultivation is often carried on on the same plot until the drop in the yield amounts to 50 per cent. In their estimate of the length of cultivation or fallow-lying indicated for a certain kind of soil the people are extremely vague and haphazard. Nor do they follow fixed rules as regards the return to fallow farms; often, without any particular reason, people prefer to clear new plots rather than to take fallow plots

[1] The value of manuring is nevertheless fully recognized. The people of Tullishi and Kamdang, for example, whose land is regularly used for grazing by the Messiriya Arabs, welcome this opportunity of having their far farms manured—provided, of course, that the cattle are let on their farmland only after the grain has been harvested.

again under cultivation. Or they may abandon a new plot, after having worked it only (say) for two years, if the crop was disappointing, without discrimination as to the reason for the failure. Thus new grain farms made on virgin land are abandoned, the farmers failing to realize that continued cultivation may improve rather than impair the land; or good land is left and condemned as 'bad' because locusts had destroyed the crop. The following story may illustrate this lack of discrimination and planning among so many Nuba farmers. About harvest time a number of Heiban farmers were clearing new fields which they were going to take under cultivation in the following year. One man, however, said he would carry on with his old plots, with which he was well satisfied and which were good, he thought, for several years yet. The day after he told me this I heard that he, too, had suddenly gone out and cleared a new plot for himself. Later he explained to me, rather sheepishly, that he had changed his mind: so many of his neighbours were abandoning their farms this year that he thought he had better follow their example.

Undoubtedly this haphazardness of farming methods has increased and shifting cultivation reached this extreme stage in recent times. Modern conditions, the opening up of a tempting, practically unlimited store of new land in the plains (in the cultivation of which some tribes at least have little experience), are largely responsible.

Here we may add too other shortcomings in the native farming methods which come under the same category: too narrow spacing of the plants, and insufficient protection of the seed and the young plant from rains and floods. The shallow holes in which the seeds are placed are scattered densely over the field, with an average space of 1 ft. between neighbouring seed holes. The space between grown plants, however, is very often three times this distance—a clear sign that a large proportion of the seed grain is wasted owing to insufficient spacing. This disregard for spacing is rather surprising, as the people practise thinning-out and transplanting of young plants. Seed-grain is also lost through sowing too early, especially on sloping ground, where the first rains are apt to wash away part of the seeds. In the absence of ridges, seeds and young plants are left unprotected from the rush of water or (close to water-courses) flooded streams. The wastefulness of these methods is shown in the fact that the people sow new grain several times in succession to make up for the seed-grain that failed to germinate or was washed away. The actual loss of seed-grain is small—perhaps a gourdful per field; but what does count, in the crowded working schedule of the Nuba farmer, is the waste of time and energy. This insufficient protection of the seeds from the rains and partly also the too narrow spacing are clear instances of the incomplete adjustment to the conditions of plain-cultivation: on terraced hill plots the first contingency would not arise, and the deep soil, often well manured, on the hill plantations would more easily bear such dense cropping.

Only a few groups in the northern hills have evolved farming methods which are more efficient. They build low ridges, either in long parallel lines

or in a network of squares approximately 3 ft. by 3 ft. large, which keep the rain standing on the plot and, on sloping ground, protect seeds and seedlings from the rush of water. The people do not plant on ridges (as many African tribes do), but use them only as what may be described a counterpart to terraces in the plain. It is no accident that this important method of plain-cultivation occurs in Nyima, Karko, and the neighbouring hills, i.e. in tribes living in low hill country, which have always had their far farms in the plain. Nowadays the Nyima tend to abandon ridging —as in other hills (e.g. Otoro) terracing on hillside cultivation is being abandoned. Why? Because (as Otoro men explained to me), with their large new plain cultivations to look after, time-saving has become essential. We have seen that the gain is apparent rather than real.

To these differences in the efficiency of farming methods in the various Nuba tribes we could add others which are no less conspicuous. Yet it would be misleading simply to class some tribes as poor and others as good or keen farmers. Individual differences of this kind certainly exist. But as regards whole groups, we must not disregard the effectiveness of environmental and cultural facts behind the apparent differences in collective energy or temperament. There are, first, marked differences in the productivity of the soil. Different groups, moreover, concentrate to a different degree on agricultural production—or specific forms of agricultural production: in some tribes young men start agricultural work later than in others, being longer occupied with the herding of cattle. The traditional preoccupation of the Nuba young men with raids and tribal warfare is still psychologically effective in some groups, keeping young men from settling down to the humdrum life of a farmer. The effect of culture contact, finally—the lure of waged labour and similar services, or the attraction of certain minor 'cash crops' (e.g. red pepper, melons, tobacco) grown in addition to the staple crops—tends to distract from the main farming effort. These differences in efficiency are well known to the people: everywhere you will hear that the Moro and Korongo are the best farmers in the southern hills, or that the Tullishi and Tima are better farmers than the Daju or Dilling people. On the whole the causes of these differences are fully realized. But occasionally they are obscured by the ever-present tendency to supernatural interpretation. Thus I was told in Tira that the Moro were such excellent farmers, not only because their land was better or because they concentrated more completely on agricultural work, but also because they possessed a certain magic which no other tribe could emulate.

Land Resources

Every tract of land in the Nuba Mountains that is (or has once been) under cultivation is individually owned. It represents land over which a certain individual holds complete and absolute property rights, including the right of alienating it or of bequeathing it to his heirs. It may be said at once that in the large majority of tribes only men can own land in this

fashion. Only in two tribes with matrilineal kinship system, Tullishi and Kamdang, can women acquire and own land in their own right. It is not unnecessary to emphasize this as the men frequently speak of their house farms and occasionally also far farms as 'belonging' to their wives. As we shall describe later, this expression refers, not to a division of land property, but to a division of labour in accordance with which co-wives are assigned work on different far farms, and wives in general allowed fuller control of house farms. Everywhere individual land holdings are marked by clearly visible boundaries—lines of stones, tree stumps, hedges, or strips of grass between neighbouring cultivated fields.

Turning from occupied and owned land to the untapped land resources of the people, we find that although all cultivated land is individually owned, not all uncultivated land is ownerless or vacant in the full sense of the word. There are degrees of vacancy. There is, first, the ownerless, no-man's-land of the uninhabited and unclaimed stretches between the territories occupied by tribes or local communities. And there is, second, vacant land in a qualified sense, over which local groups hold certain pre-emptive claims, regarding it as a store of land belonging to its members. Here we meet with a new category of property rights to land—corporate land rights, property rights vested in a corporate group (e.g. a tribe or local community) and shared by all group members in virtue of their group membership. It will be seen that corporate land rights are potential individual property rights, and that in establishing the latter (by putting a certain piece of land under cultivation) one at the same time exercises one's share in the corporate rights of the group to which one belongs. The corporate rights obtain only in so far as they do not conflict with previously established individual property rights. For the latter never lapse, and individual land holdings, even if they have been left unworked for several generations, never revert to the common store of group land. I may add that there is no feeling of unfairness with regard to such land, which, though obviously not needed by its owner, is yet not free for redistribution.

In no Nuba tribe, whatever its political system, is there any special land authority in which the corporate land rights are vested or on whose sanction all such land transactions depend. Rather do we find diffuse corporate rights, shared and shared alike by the group in question, which are in essence customary rights that have come into being in the course of time. In the case of far farms in the plain, they are even, as we have seen, of modern origin. We must picture local groups as having opened up a certain stretch of country which, promising and conveniently situated, they have come to regard as their own by the right of first occupation. And this right would extend, not only, step by step, to the tracts of land actually occupied and worked, but also, in a more sweeping though vaguer fashion, to all land in the direction of a natural extension of present land holdings.

Before we can examine more closely the nature of these corporate land

rights and of the local groups in which they are vested, we must visualize the typical forms of settlement in the Nuba Mountains.

The majority of the Nuba tribes do not live in compact villages, but in straggling settlements which are loosely scattered over valleys or hillsides. Smallest local units—'villages' in our sense—are distinguished and known by different names. But they represent localities marked off primarily by external topographical features—a gully, a spur projecting from the mountain side, or walls of rocks enclosing some high-lying plateau. Group divisions, the circles of communal life, even the distribution of homesteads, more often than not ignore these external boundaries. Natural boundaries on a larger scale, however—the valleys surrounding a hill or cutting deeply across a mountain range—define local units which are also socially significant. They enclose the territory of a tribal section, closely bound together by the fact of common habitation—the 'hill community' in our terminology, which is a community in the full sense of the word.[1]

The tribe, finally, which may extend over a number of such hills and hill communities, forms the widest unit of settlement. Let me add that this threefold system of settlement occurs only in the larger tribes. In small groups, concentrated on single hills, like Tullishi or Dilling, it is reduced to a twofold division—villages and hill communities fusing into one.

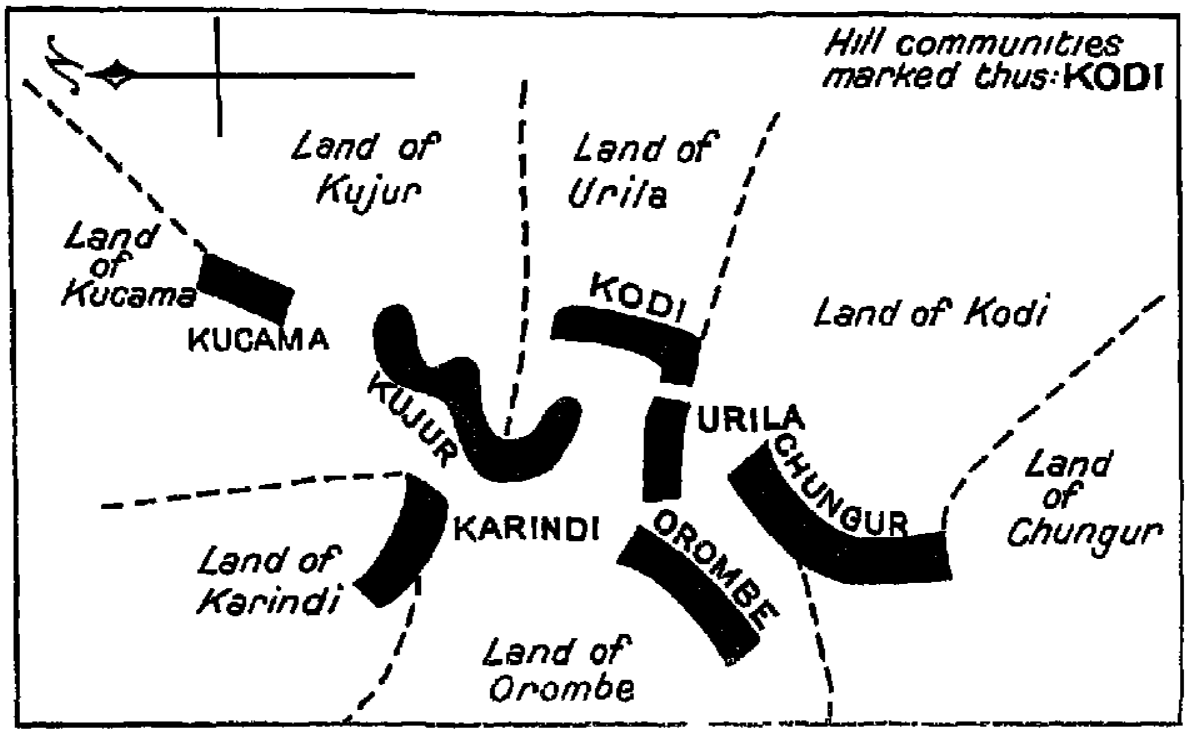
We shall meet later with concrete instances of these various forms of settlement. Here we are interested only in their relation to land rights. The corporate land rights are vested in varying degrees in the three main local units, village, hill community, and tribe. There is, first, the village land in the narrow sense, the land on which house farms are laid out. In old-established villages all this land, including also land in the close vicinity, is in firm hands. Corporate land claims are no longer converted into individual property rights. Expansion leads away from the village area. Besides, the main agricultural effort is concentrated on hillside and, above all, far farm land. We may thus disregard here house farm land and village land in the narrow sense and concern ourselves only with the land claims of village groups to land outside the village area proper.

Village land in this wider sense is not a regular feature of Nuba land resources. In most tribes, in fact, the small village group lays no claims to a separate tract of land as a potential land store for its inhabitants. Membership of the village community only entitles you to take up land somewhere on the compact land holdings of the larger unit, the hill community. Thus we find individuals from different villages (but from the same hill community) farming side by side, with their cultivations irregularly distributed over the area of hill community land. The village owns land in its own right only in two cases, which both represent

[1] I shall adopt the term 'hill community' also for groups which are living half in the plain. Here it refers to settlements surrounding a certain hill or leaning against its flank (and as a rule also known by the name of the hill), and again clearly marked off by natural boundaries from other, similar, groups.

transitional forms of settlement between village and hill community: in the small tribes in which village and hill community coincide; and in certain large, stretched-out hill ranges where villages are so widely scattered, possibly over opposite flanks of the hill range, that different villages would choose different sites for their cultivations (e.g. in Korongo and Moro). In the latter case it is not, however, the single village that establishes this claim to a separate tract of land but a group of neighbouring villages (which do not yet form a hill community proper). The claim to village land, then, so far as it exists, extends over a stretch of country which, on the hillside or in the plain, lies nearest to the settlement and more or less in a direct line from it. The tracts of village land are marked off by the topographical configuration of the country, but there are no artificial boundaries. The sketch map on p. 26 of the cultivations belonging to the hill community Tabany in the Korongo hills illustrates a typical instance. (See also p. 270.)

TRIBAL LANDS OF OTORO

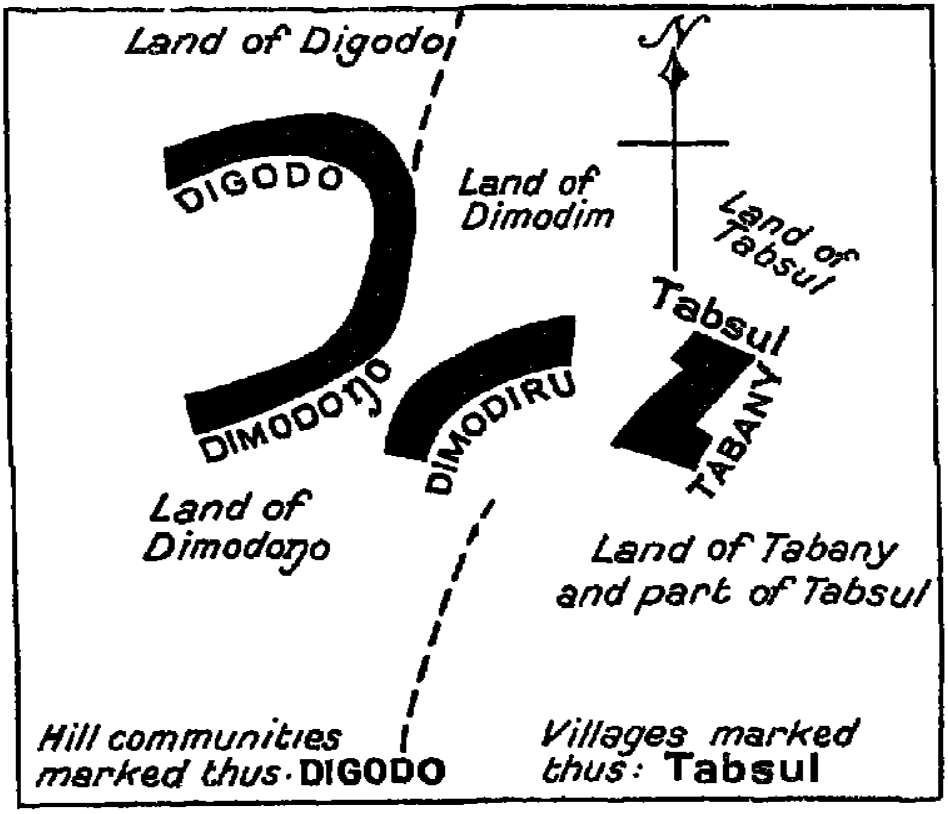


What we said about this type of village land also applies, on a larger scale, to the land of hill communities. The people of a hill community farm as a rule on the same large tract of land and regard it as their own. This land lies, again, in the comparative vicinity and continuation of the habitations. On the hillside, it comprises the uplands and valleys of the hill range; in the plain, it surrounds the hill massif or forms a broad tract of land stretching away from the hills and settlements.

As in the case of village land, there are no artificial boundaries to distinguish the tracts of land belonging to different hill communities. Nor are the land rights rigid and exclusive with regard to individuals from other, neighbouring, hill communities. Indeed, such mingling

and overlapping frequently occurs. It is limited by reasons of convenience rather than strict adherence to the customary land laws. Only in tribes in which a sharp social division, over and above ordinary local divisions, separates certain tribal sections, a correspondingly rigid application of land

TRIBAL LANDS OF KORONGO (NORTH CHAIN)



laws upholds the customary land boundaries. We shall meet with a situation of this kind in Tullishi, with its all-embracing dual division.[1]

The distribution of hill community land over the wider area occupied by the tribe is largely determined by the geographical configuration and the available space for expansion. Where the hills inhabited by a tribe are separated by broad valleys or stretches of uninhabited country (as in Korongo, Moro, or Nyima), the various communities will be able to develop their land resources within the tribal territory; where the hills lie close together (as in Otoro, Heiban, and, partly Tira), the land holdings of neighbouring hill communities will soon run into each other and expansion will be possible only on the periphery of tribal land, towards the no-man's-land beyond. Some hill communities will, of course, always be so situated as to face the periphery and no-man's-land. Indeed, we observe that where Nuba tribes have settled on a group of hills they have never done it so that individual hill communities would be completely shut in and cut off from all expansion into the land beyond the tribal

[1] In another hill, Tabak, we find a similar division into four clans (representing local divisions at the same time) each of which has taken up a separate tract of land in the plain, situated almost exactly at the four corners of the hill massif. Tabak represents, incidentally, the only instance of clans—through being local units as well—holding corporate land rights.

boundary. In one direction, at least, every hill community would keep an outlet towards that large land reserve.

In the same loose sense in which we spoke of hill community land, then, the whole tribe can be said to hold corporate rights over the land surrounding the territory on which it lives. But the definition of tribal land is much vaguer than that of hill community land; the distinction, above all, between potential tribal land—land claimed for future expansion—and the ill-defined no-man's-land beyond cannot be drawn with any exactness. Even the boundary of actually occupied tribal land is of necessity fluid: it is constantly changing as individuals from neighbouring tribes move their cultivations towards each other's territories into the stretch of vacant land between. Where different tribes live comparatively close together and their cultivations have met or nearly met, the common boundary becomes more definite. Occasionally it is marked by the back of a hill, a river bed (as between Otoro and Tira) or an outcrop of rock in the plain (as between Tullishi and Tima). No such definite tribal boundaries exist between tribes separated by wide stretches of country, although the people may draw a fictitious line somewhere midway across this no-man's-land to mark their farthest future expansion. Whether its value is more than platonic will only be seen if or when actual expansion reaches this self-imposed limit.

The vagueness of the concept of tribal land is easily understood if one remembers its comparatively recent origin. Clearly, so long as the different Nuba tribes had to keep to their various hills, and cultivation was restricted to farm land on or close to the mountain side, the question of tribal land-boundaries did not arise. All land between the narrow strips of cultivated country was no-man's-land. Subsequent expansion gradually reduced the ownerless land till, in some parts, it no longer exists (e.g. between Heiban and Otoro, or Otoro and Tira). In most parts, however, the no-man's-land between tribes has disappeared (or is about to disappear) only in certain directions, towards certain neighbouring groups, while in other directions the way to further expansion is still open. Thus the Tira find their land hemmed in on three sides, in the north, east, and west, by the cultivations of their neighbours, but open on the fourth, towards the south. The people of Tullishi and Kamdang can freely expand towards the south-east; Korongo and Moro towards south and south-east; Mesakin towards east and west. But in every case expansion has been such that this area of ownerless land lies to-day at a great distance from the settlements. In extending their cultivations, moreover, the people do not invariably proceed step by step, moving gradually away from their hills; they may leave out large tracts of inferior or unsuitable land nearer home and at once start new cultivations far afield. The vacant land may be so far from the settlements that it would be uneconomical to work it unless one is prepared to move altogether to the new area. Often this is the final solution. The existence of wide tract of no-man's-land, whether earmarked for future cultivation by the tribe

or not, does not, then, imply an actually unlimited field for expansion. It is limited by the readiness of the people to change their mode of life and emigrate to newly founded 'colonies'; it is also limited by another factor —the scarcity of water in many parts. For not only is it impossible to found settlements where there are no wells, but it is also felt as a great inconvenience if one has to work far from water supply.[1]

Again, it may happen that the no-man's-land between certain Nuba hills is occupied by outside groups before the Nuba tribes themselves, in their gradual expansion, penetrate more deeply into it. Settlements of semi-nomadic Arabs and West African immigrants have sprung up in some areas; or nomadic Arab groups have come to regard the vacant territory as grazing land for their cattle and would dispute the rights of Nuba tribes to cultivations pushed so far into no-man's-land. Conflicts of this kind between Arabs and Nuba tribes have been steadily increasing in recent years. Let me mention one instance which is specially interesting as it shows the effects of that disappearance of no-man's-land in all but one direction which we have just discussed. In this case the successive expansion of certain Nuba groups which were pressing upon each other's territories was eventually brought to a halt against land occupied by Arab and West African settlers. A section of the Otoro tribe had extended its cultivations south-eastward, right up to the land cultivated by the Tira Mande group; the latter in turn pushed south-east till it reached land belonging to the people of Ngortu; the people of Ngortu, finally, again moving their cultivations south-east, came up against the settlements of Arabs and Bornu settlers, which barred all further expansion.

Conflicts over tribal land between Nuba tribes, on the other hand, are rare. There is no feeling against individuals crossing the tribal boundary and taking up land on the territory of a neighbouring tribe. As there is no central land authority, this can be done without any formality or need for special permission. The boundary itself is irregular, showing many bays and loops, which testify to its gradual evolution from casual individual moves on both sides. In the border area, specially, we find members of neighbouring tribes mingling peacefully on both sides of the—real or fictitious—tribal boundary line.

Whether the boundary line of tribal land will always remain as fluid and trespassing be as amicably treated is a question which we shall attempt to answer presently. Here we must remark that we were speaking so far only of land claims (and possible conflicts arising from such claims) vested in groups, and benefiting individuals only in so far as they were natives of a particular group. We did not refer specially to immigrants, i.e. individuals who have severed the connexion with their native group and seek admission into a strange community. Let me say, then, that individual

[1] The area between Kamdang and Tullishi, for example, where there is still plenty of vacant land of excellent quality between the cultivations of the two tribes, is not considered very attractive in Kamdang because the scarcity of water forces the cultivator to take his drinking water with him when he goes out to his distant farms.

immigrants are received everywhere very friendly and accorded the same rights with regard to land as are native members of the community. This, incidentally, applies to Arab as well as Nuba immigrants; there are various instances of individual Arab settlers in Nuba tribes (e.g. Otoro, Korongo, Moro, Nyima, Dilling). It appears that certain individual Nuba immigrants in past generations became founders of large groups, which exist to-day as tribal sections whose alien origin is still remembered and indeed often shown conspicuously in language, clan names, or differences in custom. This liberal attitude towards strangers must have contributed to keeping the concept of tribal land fluid and far from exclusive.

Acquisition of Land

An agricultural system like that of the Nuba tribes, which is based on shifting cultivation and includes certain crops which can be grown only on virgin or fallow land, involves a regular demand for new land. A similar demand for new land is also embodied in the kinship system of the people, which provides for the allotment of new farm land to the junior male members of the family when they marry and found families of their own. We have enumerated the resources from which these demands can be satisfied: individually owned land, vacant land within the area owned corporately by the group, and vacant land in the full sense of the word—no-man's-land. In the concrete case, land can be acquired by four different methods:

(1) by clearing and cultivating new land (which method applies to the second and third category of land resources);

(2) by inheritance;

(3) by purchase;

(4) by lease or similar forms of temporary transfer (these last three methods apply only to land already owned individually).

Clearing of New Land

A farmer who intends to put virgin land under cultivation will look for it as a rule on the tract of land which 'belongs' to the hill community in which he lives. No formality is necessary beyond inquiring whether the land he has in mind does not perhaps belong to someone else. New land is always cleared, the trees are cut down and the grass is pulled out, shortly after the rains, so that it should be ready for the planting season, but also in order to give the possible owner (who might have remained unknown to the new occupant) an opportunity to come forward before the new farming season has started. The traces of a previous cultivation are frequently so much obliterated that one might easily take for virgin, vacant land what is in reality fallow land, only temporarily abandoned. The procedure in such a case varies: the owner may agree to divide his land with the new occupant (as in Otoro and Tira); or he may lend it to the new occupant for as long as it can be worked, after which time it reverts to the owner (in Nyima and Dilling); or the owner

may demand it back (this is apt to happen in all tribes). But if the new occupant has already started planting, the owner cannot evict him until after the harvest (after two harvests, i.e. two years, in Nyima). If the mistake is discovered before the planting, the owner may offer a quantity of grain or occasionally money as compensation for the work of clearing the farm, or he may offer to do as many days' labour for the occupant as the latter has put in on his farm; if the mistake is discovered immediately after the planting, the additional refund of the seed-grain would entitle the owner to recover his land.

I have recorded cases of this kind in every tribe. In a few instances it was clear that the occupation of the disputed land was not made in good faith, but carried out with full knowledge of the ownership. The new occupant knew that the land belonged to someone else, and had only taken his chance. Or, again, the occupant might claim that he thought the particular piece of land had been abandoned for good by the previous owner—this claim was put forward by Tira farmers who had taken over fallow cultivations of some of their Otoro neighbours.

This kind of claim would under no conditions hold good, for, as mentioned already, no Nuba tribe recognizes an automatic lapsing of property rights owing to discontinued cultivation. In Nyima it forms part of the accepted method of borrowing land to occupy any fallow land one likes, knowing very well that it has an owner—although one may not know who the owner is.

Occasionally land that had been cleared by one man, but had for some reason not been put under cultivation the same year, is grabbed by another man. The reasons for this open theft, specially in hills where vacant land is plentiful, are difficult to understand. In all cases of this kind which I examined (and they occur in every hill) land of exactly the same quality had been available elsewhere; nor could a private feud between owner and occupant be made responsible. I suspect that the reason is to be found in that lack of positive knowledge with regard to the quality of far farm land in the plain to which I have referred before. If you find a certain plot 'earmarked' for cultivation by another man you assume that it must be a good plot—better, perhaps, than one you could pick yourself. At any rate, if you take it over you are saved the difficult task of having to decide for yourself which is a good plot to cultivate. It must be somewhat like this that the mind of the Nuba land-grabber works.

It will have been seen that in the foregoing description we referred only to hillside and especially far farms, and not to house farm land. As mentioned before, vacant land is no longer found in old-established settlements; nor is inadvertent occupation likely to occur in the case of these farm plots which are never left fallow and whose ownership is never in doubt. This method of land acquisition would apply to house farms only in the case of people who emigrated to a new place and built their house on new, never before occupied land.

Inheritance

The inheritance of land follows the general rules of inheritance obtaining in the different communities and will be referred to in detail in that context. Here we will point out the main difference in the systems of inheritance, which corresponds to the difference between patrilineal and matrilineal kinship systems. In the former the land (of all categories) goes from father to son or is divided between the sons; in the latter the rules differ somewhat in different tribes and for different categories of land. In the matrilineal societies of Tullishi, Kamdang, and Tima far farms—modern far farms, in the plain—go from father to son. Far farms of the old type, in the vicinity of the hills, which used to exist in Kamdang, were inherited by full brothers (i.e. of the same mother) or sister-sons. Hillside farms in Tullishi, which correspond to the old-time far farms, are equally inherited by full brothers or sister-sons, or—failing the latter—sister-daughters. In Kamdang and Tima, we find in addition that intermediate type of farm land close to the hillside typical of groups living in low hill country: in Tima it is treated like the hillside farms of Tullishi; in Kamdang it is inherited by sisters or sister-daughters. In all three groups house farms go—with the house—to sons; for the sons are brought up in their father's house, live there until they marry, and after the death of the father a younger, as yet unmarried, son will take over the house.

In two other matrilineal societies, Korongo and Mesakin, the rules of inheritance partly reflect the typical kinship organization of these tribes, which admits of the exchange of children between the children's father and their mother-brother. A man in Korongo or Mesakin may thus adopt his sister's son, who will then grow up in his house as what we propose to call his 'sociological son', his own sons having in turn been adopted as 'sociological sons' by their mother-brother. Now, the far farms in Korongo are invariably inherited by a sister-son, irrespective of where he grew up, while the house farms are inherited by the 'sociological son' (who may be both a sister-son or real son). In Mesakin the rules are extremely fluid; far farms and house farms are inherited primarily by 'sociological sons', but often also by sister-sons or sons irrespective of their residence; house farms may occasionally also go to full brothers (of the same mother) if the latter happen to be in greater need of a house plot at the time. In the concrete case inheritance is always subject to a special will, which might favour or disown, as the case may be, the claims of presumptive heirs.

We may disregard for the moment the kinship implications of these complex rules of inheritance in the matrilineal Nuba groups. Two facts stand out clearly: first, the special claims of women—sisters or sister-daughters—to land. These claims are largely in the nature of a trust on behalf of male heirs (sister-sons) who have not yet reached the proper age, or who may be missing altogether in one generation, but would come into their own (as sister-daughter's sons) in the next. In Kamdang, as we have seen, women inherit a certain category of land in their own

right. In Tullishi, finally, a girl may receive a house farm from her father as part of her dowry; it will be inherited—like ordinary house farms—by the woman's sons. These last examples refer to absolute ownership of land, implying full rights of property and disposal. Temporary, qualified, ownership of land by women—comprising house plots as well as far farms—is common everywhere in the Nuba Mountains, both among patrilineal and matrilineal tribes. I am referring to the land which widows are allowed to keep for their own use and the maintenance of their small children for as long as they do not remarry. After their remarriage or death the land is disposed of in the usual way.

We notice, secondly, a certain discrepancy between the rule of matrilineal land inheritance and the customary form of settlement, which is based on patrilocal residence. For in all these societies women move upon remarriage into their husband's house; and in the majority of societies sons live in their father's house until they marry, and afterwards build themselves a new house close to the paternal home, in their father's locality. Yet the land that used to belong to their father and in the cultivation of which they may have shared, would go upon his death to a cousin, who might be living in a different village or even hill community —as they themselves would inherit the land of their mother-brothers, again often situated in some distant locality. This complication led in all groups to an arrangement by which a transfer of such inconveniently situated inherited land is made possible. In Tullishi sister-sons may give away hillside plots inherited from a mother-brother to the latter's son—'for the sake of friendship'. Or sons may buy such plots from their own fathers to prevent them from going to the legitimate heirs (whose patrimony would thus be enriched by the purchase price). Generally speaking, purchase of matrilineally inherited land is institutionalized in all Nuba groups. The exchange of land which it involves is largely between relatives (though relatives have no pre-emptive claims as against other bidders), and contains a certain element of reciprocity. For if I am ready to dispose of the land I inherited from my mother-brother, I am also ready to buy land which my father's sister-son may in turn be glad to get rid of. This correlation of matrilineal land-inheritance and a certain type of land purchase (in conditions of ample land resources) is borne out by the people themselves, who put the same interpretation to this practice and its origin.[1] The most striking evidence is the situation in Kamdang, where the matrilineally inherited old-time far farms were bought and sold, but the modern far farms, which are inherited by sons, can no longer be purchased. We realize, however, that another influence, too, has been at work here, namely, the change from the relative scarcity of land close to the hill range to the new abundant land supply in the open plain.

A further discrepancy demands explanation: in three of the five

[1] My informants in Korongo, for example, when discussing land purchase, did not speak simply of 'purchase of land', but added at once: 'purchase of land between sons and sister-sons'.

matrilineal groups far farms in the plain fall under different rules of inheritance (being inherited by sons) from those governing house farms and farm land close to the hill range. The explanation is most probably this. The modern far farm is staked out in a comparatively unfamiliar environment, on a new kind of land; it needs experience to assess its value and select a promising plot. Besides, the modern far farms are much larger than either hillside cultivations or old-time far farms, which kept close to the mountain side. They thus demand a larger working-team, composed of a man, his wife (or wives) and unmarried sons.[1] Now, if at the death of a man this farm were to go to a sister-son, i.e. to someone outside this family working-team, the economic position of the sons would suffer a severe setback. Not only would they have to discontinue their work on a piece of land they got used to, but they would have to find another vacant far farm plot in the unfamiliar, distant no-man's-land, with no experienced elder to guide them.[2]

This difficulty could not arise with hillside plots and plots close to the mountain range, which are apt to be of approximately equal quality and which represent, besides, familiar ground. In their case, too, as we have seen, particular circumstances may make the exchange of cultivations under the rules of inheritance uneconomical, and the practice of land purchase seems intended to meet such a contingency. But in the case of far farms it is more than a contingency; this difficulty would constantly arise, and in increasingly severe form: it thus had to be met, no longer by the circuitous solution of occasional purchase, but by a radical change in the rules of inheritance. The fact that in Korongo modern far farms continue to be inherited matrilineally (and are bought and sold) does not contradict this interpretation; for in roughly half of all cases the sister-son is in Korongo the 'sociological son', who lives with the owner of the land and helps him in the cultivation.

In both patrilineal and matrilineal groups the inheritance of land may skip one generation: a man may inherit his father's farm, but leave it unworked until his son puts it again under cultivation; or the owner of farm land may die at an advanced age, when all his sons (or sister-sons) are already married and have found land elsewhere; his own land will then go to their children or sister-children. In matrilineal societies, specially, the inheritance of land from a 'grandfather' (to be exact: a mother's mother-brother) is very common; it is the regular practice in the absence of direct male heirs in the groups which (like Korongo and Mesakin) do not recognize the alternative of leaving the land in trust of female relations. This way of inheriting land, through two generations of

[1] This point was stressed by informants in Kamdang with whom I discussed the change from matrilineal to patrilineal inheritance in the case of their modern far farms.

[2] This preference for familiar far farm land is shown in the instance of certain farmers in Tira and Heiban, who, having sold some of their farms, found themselves later short of land; instead of attempting to find new plots on vacant land, they asked that the previous land deals should be cancelled.

matrilineal descendants, adds a final twist to the tangle of matrilineal inheritance and patrilocal residence, and a final reason for the evolution of some regular system of land-transfer.

Purchase of Land

The preceding section explained only one aspect of land purchase. The other is scarcity of land, or the scarcity of a certain category of land, which turned land into a marketable commodity. This is true primarily of land in or close to settlements. Everywhere in the Nuba Mountains (with the exception of Dilling) house farms are bought and sold. The necessity for the purchase of house farm land arises, for example, when a young man, about to marry, looks for a suitable site, preferably not too far from his paternal home, on which to build his new house; or when a married man takes another wife and has to expand his establishment. As land in and close to the village is all in firm hands, there may be no chance of obtaining these plots and sites otherwise—unless one has the luck of stepping into a timely inheritance, or of being presented with a suitable plot by friends or relations.

Only in one group—Heiban—did I find that also modern far farms were bought and sold in this manner, i.e. for reasons of demand and relative scarcity. This happened specially when the owner of an attractive piece of land had emigrated and abandoned his cultivation. In all other groups in which far farms and hillside farms are bought and sold (Kamdang, Tullishi, Korongo, and Mesakin) the two motives for land purchase, matrilineal inheritance and relative scarcity, appear to work in conjunction. In Dilling, where a patrilineal group of very small population has a large territory at its disposal, neither house nor far farms are bought and sold.

There is no doubt that these land transactions are fully regarded as purchase and sale. The people refer to them by the same terms which they use for the purchase of other commodities.

The prices for land vary considerably in different tribes. In the chart below I have compiled the highest and lowest prices paid for land in the various Nuba communities. This changing price scale clearly reflects the differences in the local demand. It is significant that the highest prices for house farm land are paid in Moro and Tullishi, both densely populated communities which, unlike the majority of Nuba groups, live in congested town-like settlements where space for expansion is scarce, and the lowest in the loosely scattered settlements of Otoro. In Tullishi house and partly hillside farms have assumed the fullest commodity value: they are accepted as part of the bride-price, and men with surplus capital will sometimes invest it in land purchase, openly admitting that at the moment they do not require additional land for cultivation.[1]

[1] In a recent law case the chief's court even seized house farm land in lieu of a fine. This extreme interpretation of the commodity value of land was, however, disputed by the owner of the plot in question, who, in fact, preferred to go to prison rather than to forfeit his land. The Government definitely discouraged this new—and unprecedented—practice.

In most communities the local price for land also varies according to the quality or size of the land bought. In certain tribes, however, it appears standardized and uniformly low. This difference in the appreciation of land is of special significance. It supplies a criterion for assessing to some extent the relative influence of the two motives for land purchase typical of the matrilineal Nuba groups—the regulation of inheritance and scarcity of land. For where the former is paramount, the exchange of land is in the nature of a regular mutual service between relations rather than of a purchase proper, and the price is accordingly standardized and purely nominal; where supply and demand determine the transaction, the price varies considerably and tends to reflect the commodity value of the land. A Nyima practice of somewhat similar nature convincingly supports this interpretation. There the people distinguish land purchase between relatives from land purchase between strangers. In the former case the transfer of land is regarded essentially as a mutual obligation between kinship members, and in consequence the price is standardized and nominal; in the case of land deals between strangers, the purely economic nature of this transaction is reflected in an elastic (and much higher) price.

Payments for land are as a rule made in animals, though I have also recorded money payments in Otoro and payments of a mixed kind (animals and tobacco or spears) in Mesakin and Tullishi. Purchase of land implies complete and permanent change of ownership. The deal is always concluded in the presence of witnesses, so that the claim could be confirmed should doubts arise later. I recorded a few cases in Heiban and Tira in which the ex-owner of a piece of land or his heirs subsequently requested a cancellation of the land sale. Perhaps unexpectedly, they had found themselves in need of additional land, and preferred land with which they were familiar to experimenting with new, untried land. The new owners raised no objection, and the land transaction was annulled upon the refund of the original purchase money.

Land prices

Tribe	*Far farms*	*House farms*
Heiban . . .	1–2 goats	1 pig, 2 goats
Otoro . . .	—	1 pig, 1 goat
Tira . . .	—	1–2 goats
Moro . . .	—	1 goat, 1 cow
Korongo . . .	2 goats	2 goats
Mesakin . . .	2 goats	1–2 pigs
Tullishi . . .	3–4 goats	2 goats, 1 cow
Nyima . . .	—	Between relatives: 1–2 goats Between strangers: 5–10 goats
Dilling . . .	—	—

The money value of these payments in livestock is as follows: one pig, 5 piastres; one goat, 15–20 piastres; one cow, £2–3.

Borrowing of Land

This is the obvious method for overcoming a temporary shortage of land, or of a particular kind of land (e.g. in the case of a farmer who is prevented by illness from working his own, too distant, cultivation). Borrowing occurs only in a few Nuba tribes. In Tullishi land can be borrowed and used until it is no longer required by the borrower or until it has become unproductive. In Moro certain farmers who have taken up cotton cultivation (mostly chiefs and sub-chiefs), but have no land on suitable soil, and occasionally aliens, like the Dispensary Assistant, would borrow a fallow plot for two years' cotton cultivation, after which they return it to the owner. In Nyima and Dilling borrowing of land is widespread and firmly institutionalized. According to the traditional practice in Nyima, the prospective borrower would first inquire whether a certain attractive fallow plot was available for borrowing. The owner would rarely withhold his permission; the borrower would work the plot for as many years as it bore crops, and then return it to the owner. Nowadays people dispense with this preliminary inquiry and application, and simply start cultivating any likely looking fallow plot. An owner who would refuse his permission could not evict the borrower until after the second harvest. In Dilling the permission of the owner must be sought first; failing this, eviction is possible after one harvest if the borrower has already started planting, or at once if he had not yet done so. In the latter case no compensation is due to him for the labour he spent on clearing the field.

We must add in conclusion that land is also given away free between friends and relations as a personal favour, without any strict, formulated, obligation (in Tullishi and Otoro). This voluntary gift of land is not, apparently, a very safe method. Among the Otoro I was told (though I could not record any concrete cases) that sons frequently repent of the generosity of their fathers and demand the return of the land in question—a demand which would always be granted. In Tullishi the claim of a son that he had been given a house farm (which would otherwise have gone to his father's sister-son) by his father was disallowed because he could not prove that he had paid the customary purchase price in return. In Nyima the wish to render friends or relations a favour of this kind is combined with an economic transaction proper.

It will have been seen from the foregoing description that no simple, general, statement on the relative importance of the various methods of land acquisition is possible. The situation varies widely with environmental conditions and the preponderance of this or that of the multifold social factors which enter into land transactions. In groups able (and ready) to utilize large land reserves of no-man's-land, people take virgin plot after virgin plot under cultivation, and have hardly yet begun to

turn back to fallow, inherited, land (e.g. in Tullishi, Kamdang, Korongo, Dilling, Moro). In other groups, where expansion has reached a temporary limit, inheritance of land comes to the fore (e.g. Mesakin, Tira, Otoro, Heiban), or borrowing develops on a large scale (e.g. Nyima). A small group with a large previous territorial expansion which it can no longer utilize (partly because of the smallness of the group and partly because modern conditions have made expansion in other directions possible) will freely offer its abandoned fallow land to borrowers. This is the case in Dilling, where large tracts of Dilling land have been 'borrowed' by neighbouring Nyima sections and Arabs from Dilling Town. The following chart illustrates the incidence of the different methods of land acquisition in some tribes (V means virgin land, H inherited land, B purchased land, L land that has been lent, and G gifts of land).

Tribe	*Far farms*	*Total*	*House farms*	*Total*
Korongo . . .	1H, 4V	5	5H	5
Mesakin . . .	1B, 2H, 6V	9	9H	9
Tullishi . . .	2H, 8V	10	4H, 6B	10
Moro . . .	2H, 5V	7	—	—
Nyima . . .	8H, 7L, 1G	16	8H, 2L, 2G, 1B	13
Dilling . . .	2H, 8V	10	1H, 9V	10

The picture of Nuba land tenure is the typical picture of a system in transition. The varied methods of land acquisition and their greatly varying incidence in different groups appear as stages in this gradual development, which is essentially an adjustment to changing conditions. The question arises in what direction these changes are leading; at what speed they are proceeding; and, more particularly, whether they tend towards a development which, at some future stage, might cause maladjustments or give rise to social (and political) conflicts. Such future conflicts and maladjustments are indeed throwing their shadow forward: we have recorded the fact that in one tribe—Heiban—land purchase already extends to modern far farms, once staked out in vacant no-man's-land; we have met with the practice, in Heiban and Tira, of repudiating, in the present generation, gifts or sales of land sanctioned by the previous generation; we shall presently hear of a land dispute between two Nuba groups (an unprecedented occurrence) which was the result of the disappearance of no-man's-land around Tira. It is significant that all three examples come from communities which have adjusted themselves most fully to modern conditions—from Heiban, where the people have lived longest in the plain, and Tira, where the modern plain cultivations are increasingly devoted to the growing of cotton. Though hardly serious in themselves these facts are important indications of possible future maladjustments. I envisage a twofold trend in the changing system of Nuba land tenure, pointing towards such latent conflicts—namely, an increased competition

with regard both to individual land property and to land holdings of corporate groups.

Considering the large areas of vacant land surrounding the Nuba hills, and considering also the low birth rate of the hill tribes, the classical causes of land maladjustments—pressure on land and land shortage—seem to have little application. But we must remember that land is not of equal value. We have given instances of the increasing discrimination of the people with regard to land; they are prepared to pay for a particular, tried, piece of land and might repudiate a previous land transfer, rather than take up free an indifferent plot or experiment with new, unknown, land. If I am right, even a far-reaching change in the system of inheritance was due to these factors. Then there is the question of the increasing distance of far farms laid out on newly opened-up no-man's-land. Far farms which it takes two hours' walk to reach, over rough country, with many climbs on the way, are by no means rare. A loss of four hours every day must render cultivation uneconomical, not counting the waste of energy and leisure time. These facts are already entering in the calculations of the people; for many, as we have heard, are moving down from their hill habitations or founding new colonies out in the plain to be nearer their land. Where such a solution is impossible for certain reasons—unwillingness to move, lack of water in the open plain, or illness and old age—the alternative will obviously be an increased appreciation, and thus commodity value, of good farm land in the vicinity of the settlements.[1]

The discriminative attitude towards land is bound to become more pronounced with the increase in the cultivation of special crops, demanding special soil, above all, commercial crops like cotton or simsim. In Tullishi, where till recently the people from the different villages kept strictly to their separate tracts of land in the plain, 'trespassing' has become quite common on the western side of the hill because only one of the three village communities farming there possesses land suitable for cotton cultivation. Increased competition for a special type of land thus also affects the corporate land claims of communities. In our example, the village community of Tullishi is readily sharing its cotton land with its neighbours. But it is conceivable that, with land competition becoming more severe, communities might find it advisable to define more rigidly their property rights to land which they have cause to value above other, vacant, land. They might, in the extreme case, exclude individuals from other hill communities or tribes from the use of their land—and so be forced to define more closely the most fluid land concept in the Nuba tribes, that of potential tribal land as distinguished from no-man's-land. A development of this kind is foreshadowed in a dispute over a piece of land—'no-man's-land' to one of the groups involved—which arose in 1939 between the peoples of

[1] People from Kamdang had to abandon a promising colony at Gingara owing to a blood feud with local Arabs. Since then (about seven years ago) they have not dared to return, and land pressure in their part of the hill is becoming more and more severe.

Ngortu, north-east of Talodi, and some Tira and Otoro farmers from Tira Mande and Chungur respectively. The latter had planted simsim on a plot near Ngortu which men from that hill had previously cleared but left uncultivated. The Ngortu men discovered this only when the simsim was nearly mature; they were extremely annoyed, and revenged themselves by seizing the whole simsim crop. They felt fully justified in doing so as, in their opinion, it was a clear case of trespassing. They based their property claims on two grounds: first, that they had cleared the land—a weak claim, which was at once disputed by the other party, as it had only been a summary clearing by fire in Arab fashion; and, second—the more significant ground—that the plot in question was undoubtedly Ngortu land because it was closer to their settlements than to either Tira Mande or Chungur.

The increasing complexity of land transaction brings new problems to the fore—the problems of legal sanctions of land deals and of the legal protection of land property. We have mentioned the absence of any traditional land authority. Land deals were formerly strictly private matters between individual families. In most Nuba tribes no central political authority existed in pre-British times that could have taken official cognizance of, or guaranteed, land transactions. Even in groups with an indigenous system of chieftainship land deals and land disputes were never brought before them. Disputes over land were by no means rare; but these disputes, which were over the inheritance of land or trespassing on individual land property, would be settled between the parties concerned in accordance with precedent and equity. They could be so settled because they did not involve decisions on the principles of land tenure or question the legal validity of customary land titles. They did not, in other words, involve constitutional issues. This is precisely what modern land transactions and disputes are doing (or will be doing). Here, then, the changes in Nuba land tenure must move parallel to changes in the whole concept of Nuba political existence. To-day, land disputes are submitted quite naturally to the modern chief's court. The political machinery has thus been provided, and has been readily adopted by the people. But it is as important to ensure that the working of the new machinery should be equal to its future task. As case-to-case decisions based on precedent and considerations of equity will prove inadequate, decisions on 'constitutional issues' will come into play. New land titles will have to be laid down and old ones reformulated. In short, a customary law will have to be aided by expressly stated general principles. It is doubtful whether this can be achieved without more specific guidance from the Administration.[1]

[1] The decision of the Tullishi court referred to above to accept—or demand—land in lieu of fines is a case in point. Here a definition of the 'constitutional' land rights of individuals is apparently already necessary. The land titles involved in the unlimited borrowing of land by the Nyima on Dilling territory may also have to be defined more adequately in the near future.

The Year's Cycle

In the following I will attempt to give a consecutive description of the various activities of the Nuba farmer as they follow upon each other in the course of the year. The distribution of agricultural activities over the year's cycle varies but little from group to group. Such variations as exist are due to small differences in the rainfall or nature of the soil, which may permit earlier planting in one area and demand later planting in another, and partly also to the varying preoccupation with non-agricultural work in different groups. The Moro, for example, who are keen hunters, devote the first weeks of the rains to hunting and lag somewhat behind with their planting; in Nyima, where large numbers of young men go out to work as wage-labourers during the dry season, planting may be delayed for this reason. We may disregard here these insignificant deviations from a common time-table and base our description on the farming calendar of our representative group—the Otoro.

The first few showers which herald the beginning of the rainy season, in the middle or end of April, are disregarded. As soon as the ground is softened by the rains, the farming activities begin. Early in May the fields are cleared in preparation for the planting; the stalks left over from last year are pulled out, thrown together in small heaps, and burnt. As a rule the men clear the far farms and the women the house farms. Where there is danger from goats or cattle, in or close to the villages, the men build thorn fences round the plots to be planted. With the actual planting one waits till the first light showers have given way to heavier rains. Until then work has been irregular and leisurely. When the planting starts, activity at once becomes general and energetic.

The far farms are planted first (with grain); house and hillside farms later. The people work regularly, with few pauses, every day from 6 or 7 a.m. till midday. You can see them standing on their plots, reaching out with their long spades, and quickly covering the large square, the centre of which they form, with shallow seed holes. Then they put the spade aside and walk over the prepared square dropping the seeds—five to six grains at a time—into the holes, which they tread flat with their feet. Thus they add planted square to planted square till the whole field is planted. In the shade of a tree they keep a gourd of water and a little food with which they refresh themselves once or twice during their morning's work—at about nine o'clock and again shortly before noon. They work quickly: husband and wife working together clear and plant a plot of about 650 sq. yds. in four hours. The speed and ease of the work depends, however, on the condition of the soil. The superficial scratching as I have just described it can only be applied on sandy soil, on which only little grass grew during the dry season. Grassy plots must be hoed up thoroughly before the seed can be dropped into the soil. It takes about a fortnight's steady work till the planting of grain is completed.

One activity is hardly finished when new ones are due to begin—after-sowing and first weeding. It is the end of May by then. The farmer walks round his grain fields looking for places where the grain has not come up and plants new seeds into the gaps left after the first sowing. This after-sowing often continues till very much later. The first weeding, known as the 'cutting of the old grass', is intended in the main to clear the farm plot of last year's grass, which the burning of the farm has only imperfectly removed. Farmers who are late with their planting, on the other hand, will find their fields densely covered with new grass as well; they combine planting with the first weeding by hoeing the whole field thoroughly before sowing. Again, up on the stony hillside farms, where grass and weeds grow more slowly than in the plain, farmers behindhand with their planting may start sowing while stalks from last year are still standing, leaving the clearing to be done together with the first weeding.

The people are now working longer on their fields, till the late afternoon. Women go home earlier, to look after the home and the preparation of food; men later, often not until dusk. Weeding is naturally much slower work than planting on cleared plots; a man and a wife, for example, can weed only about 230 sq. yds. in a working day of six hours. Apart from farm work proper, both men and women also cut firewood: women the light brushwood, men big branches or trunks of trees. Nearly every evening you will see them walk home with firewood on their heads in addition to the bundles of spades or sticks and gourds for food and water.

By early June the first weeding and all belated clearing is finished. Now maize is planted on house farms, and simsim on hillside or far farms; a little later groundnuts are planted on separate, quickly cleared, small plots. About that time the farmers begin to thin out and transplant the grain plants. They remove one or two of the four to five plants that had been sown together, trim their leaves and transplant them to vacant interspaces or to the edges of the field. A short lull in farming activities which now follows coincides as a rule with the short spell of dry weather that can be expected towards the middle or end of the month.

In July, with renewed and heavier rains, activity revives again. Grain has its second weeding and simsim its first (of two weedings). The people who grow cotton begin to plant it towards the end of the month. August sees the third weeding of grain. Now the ground in the plain is so soft that no tools are used in weeding, but the grass and weeds pulled out by hand. Immediately after a heavy rain the farmers who have both plain and hillside cultivations would work on the latter first, because—as they say—the stony hillside plots keep the humidity less well than the soft soil of the plain cultivations. Finally, tobacco is planted, and soon the first crops of the year are harvested and eaten—maize, and the leaves of the bean-plant (which are used as vegetables).

During the rains the women also collect certain edible greens and the leaves of certain trees, which are cooked and eaten with simsim or corn

gruel.[1] Other grasses are collected by both men and women as fodder for pigs or cattle. Edible fruits, too, are gathered; but this is nowhere done systematically, nor do these fruits constitute a regular contribution to Nuba diet. Children, above all, will pick the fruits and eat them at once; adults may take small quantities home as food for the family.[2]

A second, longer, lull sets in early in September. If one has been on time with the various weedings, there is little to do now till the light grain on house and far farms has matured. Some farmers make use of this slack period to clear fallow fields of grass or cut down the branches of trees on virgin plots which they intend to cultivate in the coming year. Having thus staked out their claims, they leave the grass and the cut-off branches on the fields till later in the season, when they will complete the clearing. In the meantime, the foliage on the cut-off branches serves as food for grazing goats and sheep. Towards the end of the month the early-maturing grain is ready to be harvested. On the house farms some of it is cut at once and used for food; one gourdful is set aside for seed-grain; the rest is tied up and left to be cut later, from time to time, as the household requires new supplies. The light grain on the far farms, too, is tied up, eight to ten plants being tied together about 5 ft. above the ground, the top of one stalk serving as a rope, after which the stalks are broken just above the knot. By this method the broken, heavy plants are kept from dropping on the ground while at the same time the heads are brought down to a convenient height for cutting, which is to follow later.[3] Tying up grain is tiring work; it takes a man working alone three days to tie up the grain on a far farm of average size.

In places where the grass is very dense a fourth, last weeding of the heavy grain is performed when no more heavy rains are expected. Soon, too, simsim begins to mature. It is picked by pulling out the whole plants, tying them in bundles of thirty to forty plants each, and then cutting off the lower part of the stem. The fruit-bearing upper parts are placed on rocks, small timber-stacks, or on the roofs of flat-topped huts, to dry in the sun. The bundles of simsim are arranged carefully in layers, alternative layers being placed at right angles. All this is women's work, three to four women always working together. They can pick a simsim plot of average size in a day.

October passes, still a comparatively slack month, filled out with the tying up of light grain and the picking of simsim. Towards the end of

[1] See Appendix II.

[2] The Tira women plant seeds of the Doleb palm in deep holes in October. The tender shoots, which come up in May–June, are dug out and eaten, being regarded as a great delicacy.

[3] The Tira follow a slightly different method. The broken grain tops above the knot of neighbouring bunches of plants are fastened together in long, continuous rows, so that they form, as it were, horizontal 'bridges' between the upright bunches of tied-up stalks, from which the heads of the grain hang down somewhat like grapes from a vine. This method is even more convenient for cutting, but also more delicate and lengthy. It is used mainly by younger men eager to show their proficiency, while older men prefer the simpler method, which is the same as in Otoro.

the month the first groundnuts are dug out. During this period farmers work more leisurely, visiting their farms only every second day or so.

In November the light grain is being cut. Stacks for the drying of grain made of timber and dry stalks are put up in the villages. Every day one can see women carrying baskets full of newly-cut grain home from the far farms. Red pepper and *daraba* have been picked and are drying in the sun outside the house. Towards the middle of the month these activities reach their peak. The harvest of groundnuts, simsim, and light grain must be finished by the beginning of December, when the heavy grain will be cut and at once placed on the prepared drying stacks. Beans are dug out, and the picking of cotton starts. The cattle are now let into the villages and the farms nearby to feed on the grain stalks. A few weeks later the stalks of the house farms will be pulled out and burnt (with the exception of the maize stalks, which are used as fodder for bulls) and the ground raked clean. House farm terraces will be repaired, houses rebuilt, and grass cut in the bush, tied in bundles, and taken home for roofing. New far farm land will be cleared and prepared for next year's farming. The grass which had been cut two months previously is now burnt on the newly cleared plots. This clearing and also the cutting of trees on virgin or fallow land has been going on all this time. Smaller trees are cut down with the axe, about 2 ft. above the ground, bigger trunks are destroyed by fire. Farmers, incidentally, always clear a larger plot than they will need for next year's cultivation; they thus allow always for some measure of expansion in the subsequent years, particularly for the regular rotation simsim—grain. Finally, the grass all round the villages and on the hillsides is burnt, partly to facilitate movement and partly in preparation for the hunting season, which is about to start.

The farming season is virtually at an end. The next three months see little agricultural activity. Towards the end of December or beginning of January simsim, which has been left to dry for two months, is shelled and stored. In the middle of February the tobacco leaves are picked, dried and ground, ready for marketing. In March the grain is taken from the drying stacks to the threshing grounds near the village—cleared spaces on level ground, the floor of which has been beaten flat.[1] The grain is threshed and winnowed and then taken back to the houses to be stored in the granaries. The threshing is mostly done in the coolness of the evening, or even by night, by a number of men working together; they are helped by the women, who will winnow the grain, pack it into their baskets, and carry it back to the house, where the family head himself will supervise the storing. End and beginning of the agricultural year are close together in the Nuba Mountains. It takes the best part of a month till the grain is all threshed and stored. By this time the first light showers may have already fallen, and from threshing and storing the people turn straight to clearing and planting.

[1] In Heiban, where only the light varieties are grown, the grain is threshed already in February.

The bare framework of agricultural activities which we have drawn in the foregoing description is filled in reality with a multitude of social events linked, directly or indirectly, with farm work. Certain feasts and ceremonials introduce an element of diversion and relaxation; others lend their weight to an important farming event; others again initiate or terminate seasonal phases or serve as signals for this or that activity. As the dry season is not entirely a season of leisure, so is the rainy season not exclusively a season of toil. Dances and festivities, most numerous in the dry season, reach into the first weeks of the farming season and are resumed again before the rains have stopped. From the time when the grain is beginning to grow, however, till the cutting of the new grain—during the time, that is, when farming activity is most intense and admits of no delays—dancing and all large-scale entertainment is at a standstill. In many tribes ritual *tabus* forbid all singing on the farms and all dancing in the villages. The rational motive of avoiding distraction during this most busy period appears in the guise of superstitious fears: the fear that singing or shouting would stop the growth of the grain, or that the spirits which are said to dwell in the growing grain would attack revellers.

Every important phase of the agricultural year is accompanied by some ritual event, which similarly transforms rational motives into supernatural promises. Signals for co-ordinated and well-planned efforts become repeated sacred guarantees against failure and misfortune. These rituals may be of a very specific and detailed nature as in Heiban or in Koalib, where nearly every cultivated plant and every phase of its cultivation have their separate rites, their own priestly experts, and command special magic gestures symbolic of the growth which these rites are meant to ensure. Or these rituals may be of a more general and abstract nature, as in Dilling or Nyima: here we find a few great annual ceremonies which herald the main phases of the agricultural year—sowing, the harvesting of the first-fruits of the year, and the harvesting of the staple crops—but which are at the same time also believed to ensure, in a comprehensive fashion, the health and prosperity of the community.

The pragmatic significance of these rites and ceremonies as signal events for important activities is everywhere conspicuous. Thus the people may not start sowing or harvesting this or that crop before a certain ritual has been performed. In most tribes special priests are charged with fixing the date of these 'signal rites' and organizing the beginning of the agricultural activity which the rites are meant to initiate. Yet the purely rational aspect of these ritual functions must not be exaggerated. The knowledge of the agricultural calendar and the various seasonal signs is comparatively widespread and never a prerogative of the priestly experts. All the older men of the tribe know, for example, that the appearance of the egret and the black stork in the Nuba Hills heralds the advent of the rains; that when the *habil* tree puts on foliage the planting season is near; or that when the sun rises or sets over a certain landmark

(a prominent rock, a gap in a mountain chain) the rainy season is due to begin or to end.[1]

Indeed I have seen the beginning of the farming season fixed by the consensus of opinion among the older men of the community, independently of the decision of the grain priest. In the case of a young, inexperienced priest—or an ancient priest who is no longer in full possession of his faculties—the old men would not rely on his judgement, but would themselves take the initiative and warn their priest that the time for this or that sacrifice had come.

The pragmatic significance of these agricultural rituals, moreover, goes beyond that of a mere signal event for the benefit of the local farmer. In many tribes the different hill communities do not perform a particular agricultural rite all together on the same day, or at their own discretion, but one after the other, in accordance with a strict traditional order. By means of this 'roster' of ritual performances the religious organization accentuates tribal unity and ensures that each hill community is kept aware of its place within the wider social unit. Changes in settlement and political organization have further obscured the strictly practical aspect of these rites. The religious congregations which recognize the spiritual leadership of a common priest are essentially local groups, composed of people who live together and—above all—farm together on the same territory. The stretch of land belonging traditionally to a local community is thought of as being in the spiritual care of its 'grain priest'. Recent movements of settlements, and the opening up of the new common land in the plain, having broken down the old land divisions, have also broken down the exclusiveness of the religious congregations. As we have seen, it often happens nowadays that a man has far farms on the land of two different local communities—on land in the charge of two different grain priests. He will perform the 'signal rites' twice, at different times, in accordance with the ritual arrangements obtaining in the two congregations to which, in virtue of his double land ownership, he now belongs. He can no longer feel as closely bound by the ritual and its message as he had been when it embodied a unique and exclusive demand.

Influences of this kind must bring about a laxer attitude towards the seasonal *tabus* and ritual regulations. Yet there is no doubt that these rules were never adhered to very faithfully. True, in certain tribes the priests could levy fines from persons who, for example, were cutting grain prematurely, or eating a certain crop in the 'close season'. But the transgression itself, though called 'theft' and 'crime', was common enough and never taken tragically. In fact, there were always ways and means, little tricks known to everyone, which would help you to evade the penalty (real or imaginary): thus if you bite off the head of the grain instead of cutting it with a knife, you have committed no sin; the same is true if you tie up the grain stalks with their leaves instead of with

[1] The Nyima are the only tribe in which the observation of certain stars (the Pleiades and Orion) also serves as a basis for the tribal calendar.

a stalk; or if, taking home crops picked in the 'close season', you cover them up so that no one can see them, no harm was done.

The traditional seasonal rites, finally, do not cover the modern forms of cultivation—above all, the cultivation of cotton. Here individual experience derives no help from religious beliefs and practices. One might wonder if perhaps in the course of time this new cultivation, too, will create its background of supernatural beliefs, its priestship and its rites. Such a development seems very unlikely. Not only have we seen the practical significance of traditional agricultural rites weakening under modern conditions, but the very nature of this modern, imported crop seems to preclude the applicability of the customary sacred aids and guarantees. Once I discussed this question with a number of Koalib men in Umm Berumbeta, a centre of cotton-growing. One of them thought that perhaps later, 'when all Nuba would grow cotton', they might have a special priest for the new crop. But his colleagues laughed at such a suggestion: cotton, they argued, was brought in by the Government; how could it have rituals and priest experts of the traditional kind? Indeed, with Government supervision of cotton cultivation and the assistance and advice of Government agents to guide the cultivator, there seems little need for another guidance crystallizing in special rites or a special priestship. As a man from Tabak said to me when I suggested his people might have priest experts for cotton as they have priest experts for grain, simsim, and beans: 'The *Hakuma* is our cotton expert.'

Storage and Consumption

The final activity of the year's cycle, the storing of the crops, demands closer attention. In all Nuba tribes the staple crops are stored in special granaries built of clay and raised on pillars of stone or timber as protection from mice and ants. In some, the granaries are separate buildings, standing by themselves, while in other groups they are built into the sleeping and cooking huts. Different crops are stored separately, but different varieties of the same crop, i.e. light and heavy, red and white grain, are sometimes stored together (e.g. in Otoro). Some tribes, again, build large granaries with two to three compartments for grain, beans, and simsim (Tira and Otoro); in other tribes each crop has its own, smaller, granary. Maize and occasionally seed-grain, is not stored in a granary but hung up, unthreshed, from the roof of a hut; the Tira sometimes treat the light grain from the house farm in the same fashion. Where the seed-grain, too, is stored threshed, this is done after one has finished with the bulk of the grain; the seed-grain is tied in bundles and hung up in trees till it is ready for threshing. It is stored either in separate receptacles or on the top of the grain in the granaries, since it must be taken out long before the grain store itself is touched.

In most groups co-wives live in different houses, each of which has its own granaries. The yield of the farms 'belonging' to different wives, or their share in the yield of a common far farm, is thus stored separately

in the different houses. These separate grain stores provide the food for the individual household, i.e. the wife, her children, and, partly, her husband, who will eat with each of his wives in turn, on different days. The different households (i.e. the households of different co-wives) have no exclusive right to their share in the family income. From the household stores the husband will also defray certain common expenses borne by the whole family: the payment of tax, the purchase of livestock, the expense of group labour or a family feast, or the bride-price for a son. If the stores of one household are running short, they will be supplemented from the household stores of another co-wife.[1] In some tribes (e.g. Heiban) we find one large common granary in the house of the senior wife, which is stocked first when the harvest is brought in, irrespective of the provenance of the crop; the rest of the crop is divided up equally between the households of the co-wives.

In each wife's house the farm produce is further divided up and distributed over different granaries, in accordance with the division of the yield into separate shares of husband and wife, and into a portion to be stored for a longer period and one to be used at once. The former is kept in the big granaries of the house, the latter either in small granaries or in pots in the cooking huts of the women. In the big granaries—the 'men's granaries'—the yield of the far farms and hillside farms is stored, the small 'women's granaries' taking the overflow. The women's granaries are reserved, besides, for the grain crop and other produce from the house farms—the 'women's farms'—somewhat reduced by the household needs of the preceding months, and also for certain minor crops which never last very long, such as groundnuts, red pepper, *daraba*. When the new year's crop has been stored in March or April, the women's granaries will be drawn on first for the current needs of the household.

This division of the farm yield between husband and wife is in reality more complicated, and also less uniform, than it appears from this description. We will disregard these differences for the moment and consider only one aspect, namely, the control of the women over the produce stored in their granaries. The disposal of this produce, whether it is used for the food of the family of for marketing and the personal expenses of the wife, is left completely to her discretion. We notice, then, that the women are allowed full control over the family larder only at the time when the big granaries are still full and when there is a comparative surplus of food available. Once this surplus and 'overflow' is exhausted and the big granaries have to be used—once, that is, the family food economy is reduced to one source of supply (which must last till the coming year)—the man assumes control. He will hand over the family food allowance to his wife at regular intervals (one month in Otoro; about ten days in Heiban). She will keep this food allowance in pots in her

[1] In a matrimonial case which I recorded in Tullishi the refusal of a wife to share her grain stores with a co-wife was regarded as a ground for divorce by the husband.

cooking hut. This allowance does not include grain for beer-making, which the man will dispense separately whenever he plans a family feast or group labour on his farm. But while the wife is still drawing on her own granaries she will put aside a handful of grain every time she takes out grain for cooking as her contribution to the beer expenditure of the household.

The grain stored in the women's granaries lasts as a rule into July–August —that is, approximately till fresh maize can supplement, for a month or two, the staple fare. A month later the new grain from the house farms provides another welcome change of diet. With the new grain to supplement the stores in the granaries, there should be sufficient supplies of old grain left to tide the household easily over the next four months or so till the newly cut grain (light and heavy) has all been dried, threshed, and stored. In less prosperous households or after a poor harvest the grain in the granaries would only last till December–January, till the heavy grain is being cut on the far farms, and the needs of the household would have to be met from these fresh supplies.[1] In either case the immediate consumption of new grain would be so regulated that the stores for the coming year would comprise both light and heavy grain and thus ensure this elementary variation in the native diet.

When the new grain is to be stored the granaries are emptied of what is left of the old grain, perhaps one or two baskets full, and filled with the fresh supplies. This old grain, which is stored in pots inside the huts, is no longer fit for eating; it is said to cause indigestion and diarrhoea, and is used for beer-making only.[2] As I have mentioned already, storage of grain for more than one year is restricted to a few groups cultivating a particularly heavy variety (Korongo and Moro). The method of storage is the same as in the other groups, except that threshing is postponed by a month or so, which gives the heavy grain a longer time to dry. The stores of old grain are left in their granaries and the new harvest is stocked in vacant or newly-built granaries. It is interesting to note that when in 1939, during an acute shortage of grain in Heiban and Otoro, these people were offered the heavy, stored grain from Korongo, they rejected it after a short trial, having found it too hard and indigestible.

The storing of the staple crop in the big 'men's' granaries is the stock-taking of the Nuba farmer at the same time. He counts basket for basket as it is being carried from the threshing ground to the house and tipped over the granary wall. From the total quantity stored, calculated in the

[1] See chart in Appendix II. Of twenty Tira households selected at random in 1938 (a bad year), four had enough grian left in November to last for another two months, three had grain for one more month, two had grain for about a fortnight, and eleven had no grain left at all.

[2] In Tira I was told that if a granary was still more than half full of old grain, a large proportion of this old grain could still be used for food, for it would be less crushed and spoiled than the grain of which only little is left on the bottom of a nearly empty granary. In this case (incidentally a contingency unlikely to occur in Tira) the old grain would be left in the granary and a new one built to take the new harvest.

standard measure of the tribe, the basket, he is able to tell with fair accuracy how he will fare in the coming year.[1] Farmers could always inform me how many basketfuls their various granaries contained and how many months' food the total represented. There is no secrecy about it, either. The wealth produced from the land becomes invariably public knowledge: the heaped-up grain stacks on which the grain is left to dry are visible to everyone; in threshing one is helped by relations and neighbours; besides, a lucky harvest is soon revealed by the farmer himself, in the liberal scale of his family feasts and ceremonies. Indeed, in every Nuba tribe considerable pride is taken in the display of this wealth. The high-water mark of farming success, a granary filled to the brim, becomes an occasion for a great feast, to which the whole village may be invited. The normal harvest feast of the Tira, for example, which is of rather modest proportions, is turned into a big festivity, including the slaughtering of a goat or two, if the granary is full. The Otoro have a great celebration if the stores in the women's granaries last till the new grain is being cut on the house farms (in September), and the first two basketfuls of grain taken from the (as yet untouched) men's granaries provide the beer for the feast. In Heiban, Laro, and Koalib we find the special ceremony of the *orinyate*, celebrating the filling to the brim of a granary. The granary is painted red and white, the village priest is summoned to bless (as we should say) the grain, an animal is killed, and plenty of beer provided for the guests. The colour scheme of the decoration is changed to red, white, and blue, and the scale of the feast becomes more ambitious with successive performances; the first three times that one has occasion to perform the *orinyate* a pig is killed; the next three times a goat; and after that a bull or two goats. The jaw bones of the animals are tied to the granary or a tree nearby as a lasting memento of the successful year.

This social elaboration of success in farming must clearly provide a strong incentive to individual enterprise. But it shows at the same time the exceptional nature of such peak achievements. Granaries filled to the brim are indeed far from common. In 1938 only three families celebrated the *orinyate* in the whole of Heiban (out of a total of perhaps 500 families); in 1939, a better year, there were nine celebrations.

We shall later examine the distribution of wealth and poverty in the Nuba tribes and the general question of the adequacy of the Nuba farming economy. One more specific inadequacy has already become apparent. The restricted system of storage precludes in most tribes the distribution of produce over several years. One year's surplus cannot be used to balance a possible loss in the following year. On the contrary, as we have just seen, public opinion even demands that the surplus of

[1] That we have here a standard measure in the full sense of the word is shown by the fact that the baskets in which the crop is actually carried to the granaries may not correspond to the 'baskets' in which the yield is calculated; in Heiban, for example, the former has roughly half the capacity of the latter. In Nyima and Dilling a different measure is used, the *kutkur*, a large bowl made of cow's dung.

a successful year should be converted into immediate liberal expenditure. As we shall see later, this attitude only expresses a general tendency of Nuba economy, which is, to prevent the accumulation (and thus inequality) of wealth. But it also renders the food economy of the tribe most vulnerable. It prevents any effective insurance against the perennial risks of locusts, droughts, or failures of the crops. It is not surprising, then, that famines visit the Nuba hills with sinister regularity.

In a Tira house I found, hanging from the roof, a small 'iron ration' of dried, unthreshed grain (the early variety) and maize, which had been kept for two years as a famine reserve. In Tira, too, after a bad locust year, the people were planting more simsim than usual in case the next year should again prove unlucky. The extra simsim was not, however, planted for food, but primarily for marketing, i.e. for exchange against grain from more fortunate areas. The individual group cannot, in fact, produce by itself a food reserve that would insure it against these emergencies. The only hope is to exchange simsim or possibly livestock for grain or to import by some other means food into the famine-stricken district. To-day, markets and trade supply ready instruments for such exchange. In the event of famine, the Government intervenes with emergency measures. But it is still no rare sight, in bad years, to find men wandering round the hills, visiting other tribes where they have friends or relations or with which they are linked by some claim of tribal kinship, in the search of food or luckier land. Indeed, the traditions of the Nuba tribes are full of such wanderings and temporary migrations, which were the only means with which isolated and barely self-sufficient communities could counter the threat of famine.

Organization of Labour

The regular labour team in the Nuba tribes is small—surprisingly small considering the ambitious scope of their farming activities. It consists of a man, his wife or wives, his unmarried daughters and, partly, sons, if they are old enough to join in the farmwork. Daughters leave the family labour team as soon as they marry; the effective co-operation of sons, as we shall see presently, is still more restricted. Certain additional forms of farming co-operation add reinforcements of an even more temporary nature. The permanent nucleus of farm labour thus consists of a man and his wife or wives. It seems logical that the extent of the agricultural activities undertaken by a family should closely correspond to the number of wives of the head of the family. The number of house farms invariably tallies with the number of co-wives, and the same is true of hillside farms and—where cultivation in the plain is distributed over several plots—far farms. The proportion may be one or two farms of each category per wife. Co-wives do not as a rule work together, but each has her own plot on which she works, possibly helped by her children. In this sense, then, the men will speak of farms 'belonging' to this or that wife. We have already stated that only in two matrilineally organized

groups, Tullishi and Kamdang, the women own farm land in their own right.

On the far farms husband and wife perform jointly the various tasks of the year—planting, clearing, weeding, and harvesting; if the man is busy elsewhere, possibly on the farm of a co-wife, the woman will carry on by herself. Only in Korongo and (formerly) Nyima did I find that women do not work with their men on the far farms but limit their farmwork to 'their' house farms.[1] The house farms are everywhere the special concern of the women. They 'belong' to the woman in a fuller sense of the word. The men may help with the heavier labour like clearing and fencing, but the larger part of the work is done by the woman alone. She also exercises a nearly complete control over the house farm produce: the gathering of the harvest and the disposal of the produce are largely left to her discretion; she will decide when it is time to start cutting the early grain or maize, what shall be used for food at once, what stored, and what put aside for other purposes. On the far farms these decisions rest with the man. Indeed, in some groups the grain harvest on the far farms must be preceded by a certain ritual which only the men can perform, while the house farm crops stand under no such ritual rule. The house farm cultivation is regarded as 'belonging' to the woman also in the sense that she need use only part of the produce for the food of the household; the rest she is free to use for herself, to buy ornaments for herself or her children or even (in a few tribes) to buy livestock. The rules with regard to this division of the family income vary considerably. The Korongo, for example, have two kinds of house farms, a smaller one worked by the men, the produce of which is used for the food of the family, and a bigger one, worked by the women, the yield of which is divided in the fashion just described. In Nyima the women can dispose in this way only of simsim, groundnuts, beans, and bullrush millet, grown on the house farms, but not of grain. In addition, certain crops grown on far farms or on separate plots may also be in the charge of the women and regarded partly as their property. This is true of the groundnut crop, part of which goes to the women and part of which is used for the household, specially as food of the children. In Otoro and Tira small girls of ten to twelve already have little plots of their own on which they grow groundnuts for themselves. Simsim, an important crop for marketing, is often divided between husband and wife, the latter being free to dispose of her share as she likes (e.g. in Korongo and Dilling; in Dilling this refers only to simsim grown on separate plots, but not to simsim interplanted with grain). Beans are a 'woman's crop' in this sense in Mesakin and Korongo. In other tribes again (Otoro, Tira, Heiban, Tullishi), the produce from both far farms and house

[1] In Nyima, the former strict exclusion of women from the far farms was due, according to my informants, to the danger from Arab raids in the plain, to which the people were unwilling to expose their womenfolk. How far this explanation holds good for other tribes whose far farms were always situated in the plain (e.g. Korongo), I am unable to say.

farms is regarded as the common property of husband and wife, and the husband will allot an adequate share in this family income to his wife for her own needs.

This greatly varying scheme of the division of the family income between husband and wife is clearly a matter of convention. The only common feature is the existence of some form of regulation assigning special property claims to wives. We cannot, for example, correlate the concrete forms which these property rights take in different tribes with other social factors—above all, matrilineal or patrilineal organization. But such a correlation is possible with regard to one aspect of the sexual division of farm labour and income. In the patrilineal societies the property rights of the women are essentially usufructory rights; they lapse with divorce—the divorced wife is not allowed to take 'her' crops or share in the farm produce with her. In the two matrilineal societies of Korongo and Mesakin, on the other hand, the wife who leaves her husband also takes 'her' crops with her. Two other matrilineal societies, Tullishi and Kamdang, arrived at a somewhat different solution: for in these two groups women own land, and although they are not allowed to take the produce from their farms with them when they leave their husband or after their husband's death (for the farm yield was produced 'from the seed-grain of the men'), they will keep the land itself after the crop has been harvested.

We turn now to the part which sons play in the co-operation of the family labour team. Again, the rules do not follow a simple formula. The main occupation of the male adolescents is not farmwork—at least, not farm work on their father's land—but the herding of goats and cattle. During the farming season they live in separate cattle camps and come into the village only occasionally, to replenish their food supply or to spend a night or two with their families. In most tribes small farm plots surround the cattle camps; they are worked jointly by the boys and young men sharing the camp, the produce being their property and being used for their food. The older boys and the young men are also expected to help their parents more or less regularly in their farm work. The beginning of this farm work, which is the beginning of the co-operation of the young men in the farming activities of the adults, seems correlated in all tribes with the attainment of marriageable age. The inclusion of these young men in the family labour team reflects the necessity of increased output from which the family head will have to defray—at least partly—his son's bride-price. But it also represents, from a wider viewpoint, a prelude to full adulthood—a training period, as it were, for the time when the young man will have to support, by his own work, his wife and children. Indeed, in most tribes the period between betrothal and final marriage ceremony (more precisely, the founding of a separate establishment) is marked by special farm services which the young bridegroom is expected to undertake for his future parents-in-law. This 'in-law farm work' (as it is called) may be arranged

ad hoc, from time to time; or it may be laid down in the form of a general rule, demanding that during this period a bridegroom should work every year on his future parents-in-law's farm (e.g. in Nyima), or that he should present the latter annually with a gift of farm products obtained from his own farm (e.g. in Dilling). Both farm service and annual gift are in this case regarded as an essential part of the bride-price. The farm work of young men thus varies with the local conception of marriageable age, and generally with the marriage rules obtaining in different groups.

It varies further with the local methods of organizing male adolescence—in particular, with the constitution of the age-grades which some Nuba tribes have evolved. In tribes which possess no age grade organization (e.g. Heiban, Koalib, Mesakin, Tullishi) the stage of adolescence at which the young men take up farm work is fairly loosely defined: by approximate age, physical development, and also inclination on the part of father and son. Where, on the other hand, such an age-grade system exists, the farm work of the young men is fitted carefully into the general framework of adolescent activities. Thus in Korongo and, partly, Moro the attainment of the third age-grade (roughly corresponding to the age of sixteen) is marked by the beginning of farm work. Though still living in the cattle camp—to which no farm plots are attached in these groups—the young men help in the farm work of their fathers or mother-brothers; they also cultivate a small grain plot, the yield of which they will offer to their mothers, and a large simsim plot, the yield of which is earmarked for their bride-price. In the well-disciplined age-grades of Otoro and Tira the first grade (aged roughly thirteen to sixteen) is mobilized for regular group labour on the farms of parents or certain prominent and well-to-do individuals; the young men of the second grade (aged sixteen to nineteen), who are mostly already engaged to be married, help in the farm work of their parents; the third grade combines with this activity the supervision of the group labour of the most junior grade. In Nyima the young men who have been circumcised (aged eighteen to nineteen) are allotted a special task, namely group labour performed on the farms of certain priests or chiefs. There is no special period during which the Nyima young men are expected to work on their father's land. They often take up a farm of their own immediately after they quit the cattle camps. But the Nyima marry late, much later than the other tribes, and many young men already possess farms of their own (from the produce of which they will some day pay their bride-price) while they are as yet neither married nor engaged.

When all sons and daughters are married, the family labour team is reduced permanently to its minimum size. With the family, family expenditure, too, must shrink, and it no longer requires co-operation on a large scale. Death of a wife will further reduce the working team, until old age or death of the man leads to its break-up. Old people who are no longer able to walk long distances will limit their farm work to house plots. Old widows or widowers, left without help, will often leave their

house and farms altogether and move into a single hut close to the house of a son or younger brother (more rarely a sister), who will support them now that they are no longer able to provide for themselves.

The small family labour team, periodically enlarged by the inclusion of adolescent sons (and periodically diminished through the loss of married daughters), can enlarge its scope by enlisting the help of large-scale group labour for certain specific tasks. It is recruited independently of the family group from neighbours, friends, both men and women, or even occasional guests. It is a regular institution everywhere in the Nuba Mountains, and is known by a special name not applied to the 'in-law' or age class co-operation mentioned above. This group labour is enlisted only for a day's work, but can be mobilized repeatedly at different times of the year—as often, in fact, as the owner of the farm can produce the wherewithal. Each worker brings his (or her) own tools, the owner of the farm contributing food and beer (prepared by his wives); unless it is in the 'close season', there will be music and dancing or some young men's sport like wrestling to conclude the day's work. The group labour is enlisted only for work on far farms, for grain, simsim, and, nowadays, cotton cultivation. It is devoted primarily to weeding, but also to the clearing and fencing of new plots and, on a smaller scale, to threshing. Women also organize co-operative work of this kind among themselves, with food instead of beer, for picking of simsim or an occasional weeding. The rules vary, however, somewhat from group to group. The restriction of group labour to certain specified activities seems largely a matter of convention. In planting, for example, which in most groups does not appear among these specified activities, group labour would be just as useful as in weeding or clearing—that is, would enable the cultivator to get quickly through the appointed task, and thus ease his crowded time table. The people of Heiban put, in fact, planting on their list, while the Otoro exclude it from the farming activities permitting group labour.

How often in the year an individual farmer organizes group labour on his land depends entirely on his ability to finance the enterprise. The beer is the largest item of expenditure; it varies according to the scale of the group labour, between one and two large baskets of grain for each occasion. A 'poor' farmer will organize group labour two to three times annually; a well-to-do farmer six to seven times. The organization of group labour thus definitely involves a certain 'capital' outlay in the form of the surplus of grain which must be available. We may say that the primitive 'entrepreneur' pays his workers with food, drink, and—which is at least as important—entertainment. This strictly economic aspect of group labour, however, appears balanced against the wider social aspect of reciprocity. For if friends and neighbours work on my farm to-day, I shall probably work on theirs later, and we assist each other not merely for the sake of the tangible compensation. Its very nature of a gift that must be consumed then and there limits its

strictly economic significance: it is neither transferable nor exchangeable. Nor does it really reimburse one for previous expenses, or contribute to a similar capital outlay in the future. Nor is, finally, its value stable: the food and drink one receives may be real food and drink, bought by a day's labour, to some, and a mere luxury one could easily do without to others. Yet from the viewpoints of both employer and worker the social convention of reciprocity does not obscure the economic aspect. Even if group labour were strictly reciprocal and the employer of one day would be a labourer on other people's farms for as many days as they had spent on his land, he would have 'bought' some additional advantage which he could not have produced if working alone—namely, the stimulus of team work. Moreover, the reciprocity is rarely strict. The regular 'entrepreneur' of group labour does not always work for each of his fellow workers in turn. Some of them may be unable to finance group labour on their land, prevented, possibly, by some temporary setback—illness, a poor harvest, other heavy expenses. Young men, who have no farms of their own yet or only small farms which do not warrant large-scale co-operation, join the labour team on other farms merely for the sake of the drink and entertainment. In Heiban and Nyima I have met young men who, at the beginning of the year, were joining all labour parties that were going, day after day, leaving their own farm work till the seasonal rush was over.

A temporary inequality in the economic position and in the ability to utilize reciprocal farm co-operation must, then, weigh the scales against mere reciprocity, in favour of the strictly economic considerations of 'buying' and 'selling' labour. The economic aspect will gain definite ascendancy over the aspect of reciprocity as soon as this temporary inequality tends to become more permanent. How do modern developments influence this balance?

Before turning to this question, we must discuss a factor in the organization of labour which has now disappeared—slavery. Organized raiding for slaves, the kidnapping of individuals, especially of young boys and girls, whenever the chance offered, and, on a smaller scale, trade in slaves, were all typical features of traditional tribal life. A captured slave meant a valuable addition to the household and labour team; a purchased slave, an investment of 'capital'—that is, of wealth as potential labour. But only few tribes (Nyima and Dilling) developed slavery in this sense and aimed at the possession of numerous slaves. In most groups slaves, whether they had been captured or purchased, were readily adopted into the family and became fully fledged members of the kinship group. If the slaves strengthened the labour team, they also claimed the economic 'returns' to which family members were entitled—land of their own when they married, and bride-price for their wives. The social interest of enlarging the kinship group rather than the economic motive of obtaining—'investing' in—additional labour was paramount. Nuba slavery will thus be discussed more logically under the heading 'kinship',

as an adoption into the kinship group. Strictly economically, the acquisition of slaves effected, again, only a transient inequality.

We have seen that modern changes were responsible for a considerable intensification of agriculture. The scope of cultivation has increased all round. Larger tracts of land are being worked; new crops have been introduced; and even where the cultivation is still of the traditional kind, the new land in the plains on which it is practised, where weeds and grass grow faster than on the stony hillside and rain and watercourses constitute new dangers, demands more constant attention. It is reasonable to ask whether there has been any corresponding change and intensification in the native organization of labour.

No such general change is yet visible.[1] The new labour exigencies are largely dealt with as they arise, by *ad hoc* arrangements or re-arrangements. The cultivation of cotton is a case in point. Most Nuba cotton-planters decide from year to year whether they are going to grow cotton or how much they can afford to plant without straining their labour resources or reducing the cultivation of food crops below safety point. There is also the instance of the Otoro farmers who have discontinued terracing their hillside simsim farms because 'they have no time to spare'.

In the centre of this casual readjustment to new agricultural tasks stands group labour, representing as it does the only element of the native labour system capable of expansion. Besides, large-scale group labour is indispensable in the cultivation of the most important new crop, cotton. No Nuba farmer would think of planting cotton unless full granaries enable him to employ group labour. Here the transformation which we have envisaged, of an institution in which a social obligation (reciprocity) appeared balanced against economic interests into a practice approximating hired labour, becomes manifest. The irregular distribution of cotton-growing in every Nuba tribe at once rules out strict reciprocity. In cotton cultivation, too, the temporary economic inequality which group labour may utilize (and create) tends to become permanent. In Nuba economy, which is largely a subsistence economy with hardly any provisions for long-time storage, the economic effect of an expansion of food-crop cultivation through group labour is limited: it produces only a short-lived surplus or, at the most, a stationary economic advantage. But the 'entrepreneur' who can once afford to enlist group labour for the cultivation of a 'cash crop' like cotton secures an increased return of permanent value, which will progressively add to his working capital in the modern sense of the word.

The pioneers of cotton-growing in a community are nearly always chiefs and sub-chiefs—not only because the efforts of the Government to start or increase cotton cultivation are primarily addressed to them, but also because their money wages supply them with extra capital for financing group labour. It is only one step from these monopolized

[1] It is possible that the full co-operation of women in far farm cultivation as we find it to-day represents in some groups a change of this kind.

facilities for the employment of group labour to the altogether new institution of hired individual labour. Chiefs and other waged Government servants (e.g. native police) are the first employers of hired agricultural labour. Even in a primitive group like Tullishi, the chief hires waged labour from among his people at the rate of daily labour paid in the neighbouring town, Lagowa. Hired labour in the Nuba Mountains has not yet gone beyond occasional labour, engaged for specific tasks or short periods, and intended mainly to supplement the reduced family labour team in which the family head, prevented by his office or profession, is unable to join regularly. Nor does the practice of employing hired labour seem to have spread far beyond this class of Government servants; I have met with one exception only—a Koalib priest and medicine-man who commanded high fees (paid both in money and kind) and employed local farmers on his land, being himself too busy with his spiritual tasks to look after his farms.

To summarize: the modern changes in the economic system of the Nuba tribes are neither general nor far-reaching. Even the concept of 'capital' is not, as we have seen, entirely new in the Nuba Mountains, but has only been developed further under the influence of modern conditions. The changes in the system of Nuba labour and production are, in fact, less important in their effects upon method and organization than in their social repercussions, in that they tend to further—and perpetuate—economic inequality.

CHAPTER III

ECONOMIC LIFE (*continued*)

Hunting

HUNTING is carried out both individually (with a rifle) and in groups. The first kind, being dependent on the possession of a rifle, may be assumed to be the more recent practice.[1] The traditional form, group hunting, is a kind of battue in which larger or smaller parties of men, armed with clubs, spears and shields (nowadays also rifles) and accompanied by their dogs, scatter through the bush and beat it up for game. The clubs are intended for guinea-fowls and hares, the spears for antelopes, and the shields as protection against—now most unlikely—attacks from wild animals. Big game—elephant and giraffe—was apparently always beyond the scope of the primitive hunting methods of most Nuba tribes, ignorant as they are of the use of bows and arrows or traps. In Koalib country I was told that, when once in the past herds of elephants appeared in the vicinity of the Nuba settlements, destroying the crops, the helpless villagers had to call a neighbouring Arab tribe to their aid. Ritual *tabus* and food regulations prove, on the other hand, that leopards and lions were hunted by the Nuba tribes even in the days of spears and clubs, before the advent of the rifle. To-day the Nuba hills are denuded of game and hunting is reduced to guinea-fowls, hares, an occasional antelope, *keko* (cony), wild cats, and the little monkeys which live up on the hills. But even rats are not disdained; the younger folk hunt them with relish when the grass round the villages is burned at the end of the rains, or catch them in traps made of split grain stalks. Though group hunting is most frequently undertaken in the dry season and after the first few showers it is not, strictly speaking, a seasonal activity; it may be carried out throughout the year, at least so far as the more important exigencies of farm work will allow.

As a nutritive contribution, hunting is negligible. The bag, even in large-scale group hunts, is generally poor. Yet group hunting has maintained its important place in the scheme of tribal activities and its significant connexion with religious and social institutions. In nearly every tribe first-fruit rites and other seasonal ceremonies include the sacrifice of game and are preceded by a big hunting expedition of the young men, who are charged with the task of producing the desired animal. These ritual demands for game have, of necessity, become very fluid indeed: where originally the sacrifice of an antelope (*dik-dik*) was essential, one now makes shift with guinea-fowls or hares.

In Otoro and Tira every adult male may act once a year as Master of the Hunt. He will send word to neighbours, friends, and relations

[1] The rifles found to-day in the Nuba Mountains are Remingtons and Martinis, remnants of the booty made by the Dervish army after the disastrous defeat of Hicks Pasha in 1883; Arabs sold them later to the Nuba tribes.

that he intends to lead a group hunt on such and such a day. Horn signals carry the message to distant localities. On the appointed day the hunters assemble in the village and then march out into the bush. There they split up into smaller parties of four or five. The Master need not take part in the hunting itself, but may limit himself to organizing and controlling the campaign. The hunters often wander far afield and stay away for two or three days. When they finally return to the village, the 'bag' is pooled and divided up equally between them, with the exception of the heads of the killed animals, which represent the share of the Master of the Hunt. Young men who are about to pay the final instalment of their bride-price will arrange such group hunts together with their friends and age mates in order to procure the guinea-fowls which form part of this instalment. The cicatrization ceremony, which marks the attainment of the highest status in these communities, is another occasion for group hunting. The candidate who is due to enter the society of cicatricized men will act as Master of the Hunt; the hunt is designed mainly to procure the skins of wild cats, which the novice must present to his seniors upon admission into their circle, bags made of wild cat skins being the emblems of this high status.

Hunting trophies play an important part in the life of these tribes. The jaws of the animals killed in a group hunt, which form part of the Master's share, are tied to a certain tree outside his house, where they are displayed together with bones and horns of animals sacrificed in religious ceremonies. In every house you will find minor trophies—antelope horns, skins, wings of guinea-fowls—hanging from the roof of the men's huts; girls, in their huts, keep wings of guinea-fowls presented to them by their boy friends and suitors. They wear hare's teeth round the neck—another present from their admirers; young men use the teeth of wild cats for such decoration, and old men monkeys' teeth. Certain trophies, over and above proclaiming the hunter's skill, gain almost ritual significance. Every time a man kills an antelope he will take the hooves and shoulder blades, tie them to a twig broken from a certain tree, and store the bundle under the roof of his mother's hut. There the trophies remain, even after the mother's death, until the last of her sons marries and leaves the parental home. When he is ready to go, he calls all his brothers together; a beer libation is poured over the trophies that have accumulated in their mother's hut, and then each takes his trophies away with him to store them in the hut of his senior wife. When the hunter himself dies, these trophies are placed on his grave. For the spirit of the dead hunter is believed to take his trophies with him into the other world and, thus equipped, to lay claim there to the spirits of all the animals which he had killed in his life on earth.

Livestock and Wealth

Livestock in the Nuba Mountains comprises sheep and goats, cattle, pigs, and fowls. A few well-to-do individuals, mostly chiefs and

sub-chiefs, possess horses or donkeys. The distribution of the different kinds of livestock varies somewhat in different parts of the Nuba Mountains. Certain tribes or tribal sections which have come under Arab influence (Tira and Korongo, or the people of Dilling) do not keep pigs. The eastern tribes, Laro, Heiban, and Otoro, care more for sheep and goats than for cattle, while in the southern and western groups cattle represent the predominant livestock. In the eastern tribes bulls also play a more important part than cows. In Otoro I was told that formerly only bulls were kept or bought, and that cows, if they happen to come into the possession of an Otoro man, were at once killed and eaten. The Moro, on the other hand, a typical 'cow tribe', will keep their cows, and choose bulls whenever they have to slaughter an animal. It will be seen that this preference for bulls in certain tribes has deep roots in their social and religious life.

The majority of the Nuba tribes—if not all—seem to have owned formerly a small, dwarf-type breed of cattle, which has now given way almost everywhere to the big, long-horned Arab type. Tribes which came into early contact with the Arabs have most probably long ago adopted the Arab breed. But the Otoro and Heiban still remember their old dwarf cattle; in Tullishi the breed disappeared as late as 1926, when the herds of the people were seized in the course of a punitive patrol. The Koalib Hills, which are infested with tsetse-fly, are the only area where the old breed (which is immune from triposonomiasis) has partly survived.

The Nuba people are poor herdsmen. They know next to nothing about breeding and little about keeping livestock. In most tribes he-goats, rams and boars are castrated when they are two to three years old, after having been used for breeding; fattened-up, castrated animals have a much higher market value than ordinary male animals. This is the Nuba technique of castration: in the case of he-goats the testicles are bitten through and squeezed to pulp between the hands; the testicles of rams are ground between stones; the genitals of hogs are cut open and the testicles removed.

The boys who look after goats and cattle know how to treat minor injuries with hot water or the powdered bark or fruits of certain trees. But if this simple cure fails the animal is killed for meat.

The women take care of pigs and fowls, which are both kept in the house, while the herding of goats and cattle is exclusively men's work. Women, moreover, may never milk goats or cows. In most tribes this sexual division of labour appears as a customary rule, an old-established arrangement, for which the people can only produce the typical vague explanations of habitual practices—'It isn't done' or 'It would be shameful'. In three groups, however—Korongo, Mesakin and Tullishi—it takes the form of a severe avoidance, backed by superstitious fears and by a feeling of disgust and repulsion at the very thought of letting women milk the animals. If you were to drink milk milked by women

(say the Korongo and Mesakin), your teeth would break and fall out. In all three groups this avoidance is based on the conception of the 'uncleanness' of women, whose menstruation blood (even if they are not at the moment menstruating) would spoil the milk. Small girls, before the age of puberty, are accordingly exempted from this avoidance. This milking *tabu* for women is familiar from many herdsmen tribes in Africa. It seems logical that, in the Nuba Mountains, it occurs in this rigid form only in the 'cow tribes', and not in the eastern hills, where bulls are all-important. Yet it is even more striking—and partly surprising, if we compare the Nuba milk *tabu* with that of other African herdsmen tribes—that it occurs only in those 'cow tribes' which have a matrilineal organization and (unlike the other tribes) allow their womenfolk to own livestock. The practical complications involved in this combination of factors are easily solved, for the women have their sons (or brother-sons) to herd and look after the animals. But the spiritual contrast remains: that precisely where the women's property includes livestock they are barred from handling it, and where their social position is so strongly enhanced by rules of succession and inheritance, they are branded as unclean by elementary food habits. For the moment, however, we must leave this point.[1]

Like pigs and fowls, goats and sheep are sometimes kept in the house. More often they are herded together with the cattle. During the rainy season, for half the year, the animals are kept in special cattle camps some distance from the village. In the dry season, as we have heard, they are let into the village, or at least kept there by night, being driven down into the plain every day. This arrangement is due to a variety of reasons: for a time the animals will feed on the grain stalks of the house farms after the early grain has been cut. During the dry season the water supply near the villages, in watercourses or pools close to the hillside, is likely to be more plentiful than out in the plain. Inside the village the animals will be protected from hyenas and leopards, which in many parts make the plain unsafe during the dry season, specially if the cattle camps are lightly built, with no strong walls or fences. But the dry season was also, in pre-British times, the season of raids, between tribe and tribe as well as between Nuba and Arab, and protection from this danger seems the final justification of the seasonal removal of the cattle to the villages. It is interesting to note that where, with changed conditions, the reasons for this practice have disappeared the practice itself is being abandoned. In Otoro, for example, the cattle are kept all the year round in the well-built, safe cattle camps in the plain or at the foot of the hills, although in October and November they are driven up to the hill every day to graze on the house farms. Similarly, a few progressive cattle-owners in Tullishi who have built proper cattle camps in the plain no longer keep their herds in the hill settlement for the whole of the dry season.

[1] *See* my remarks on the horror of menstruation among the Korongo and Mesakin (p. 284.)

They take their cattle up for one month only—and this for religious rather than practical reasons. For in Tullishi a special ceremony, celebrated in October-November, signals the traditional change-over from plain to hill pasture; the one month during which these men now keep their animals on the hill thus represents a token recognition of a religious practice the practical significance of which has become out of date.

The animals are watered, in the rainy season, in running watercourses or pools; in the dry season, in the shallow mud pans which the Arabs call *tabaraib*, built close to wells and waterholes and filled from there. The Nyima also use large troughs made of hollowed-out tree trunks.

Though the various local groups inhabiting a hill range have their own customary grazing lands, the division of grazing land is everywhere less exclusive than the division of farmland. Neighbouring communities which farm on separate territories will graze their herds on common pieces of land. This applies also to tribes which are close neighbours, like Korongo and Mesakin or Otoro and Tira. To-day, the grazing lands are as a rule situated far out in the plain, beyond the area of cultivated tribal land. The same changes which led to the adoption of far farm cultivation also led to the adoption of distant grazing lands and the establishment of cattle camps in the plain. The original type of cattle camp, which was situated on the lower reaches or at the foot of the hills, still exists in certain hill communities in Moro, Tira, and Otoro. It consisted of two or three stone huts, surrounded by a small, terraced and fenced-in farm plot on which the older boys in the camp grew maize and early grain. Goats and sheep were kept overnight in the sleeping huts of the boys, the cattle in separate huts. During the day the animals were driven down into the (then largely uncultivated) plain around the hills. Now that new land is available for grazing, the cattle camps have moved farther afield, into the area of fallow and virgin fields. The modern Nuba cattle camp is largely copied from the Arabs. It is much larger than the old type, consisting of six to eight huts, lightly built of wood and grass, and three to four strong timber enclosures for the cattle. A small farm plot is again attached to it.

The old camps were used for many years, by generation after generation of youthful herdsmen. The camps have 'owners' in a sense—namely, the men who first built them for their livestock. But newcomers may always join established camps, and when a camp is deserted, whoever wants it can easily obtain the permission of the original owner (or, in the case of his death, his family) to take it over. The modern camps in the plain, which must allow for the frequent changes in the distribution of cultivated and fallow land, are much more short-lived. They stay only three to four years in one place and are then moved to a new site. The camp farm is laid out in the second year, after one year's thorough manuring. A camp of the old type would number five to six boys or young men with their animals; the modern camp more than twice this number.

The boys who stay together in the same camp belong to two or three different age groups, the younger boys looking after the sheep and goats and performing the more menial tasks of cleaning the cattle pens or cooking, the older boys being in charge of the cattle and of the supervision of the camp in general. They would all hail from the same village, though not necessarily from the same clan or family; brothers who happen to belong to the different age groups attending to the livestock would stay in the same camp and sleep together in the same hut.

The individual boys do not herd only the animals of their father, but are often in charge of the herds of other relatives as well, who may have no sons of suitable age or whose herds may be too small to warrant separate supervision. The work in the cattle camps is in a large measure co-operative, quite independently of the question of the ownership of the animals. Thus the boys take turns in their various daily tasks; they help each other with the milking or the cleaning of the animal-pens; similarly, the *tabaraib* from which the cattle are watered in the dry season are built, kept in repair, and used by groups of boys together.

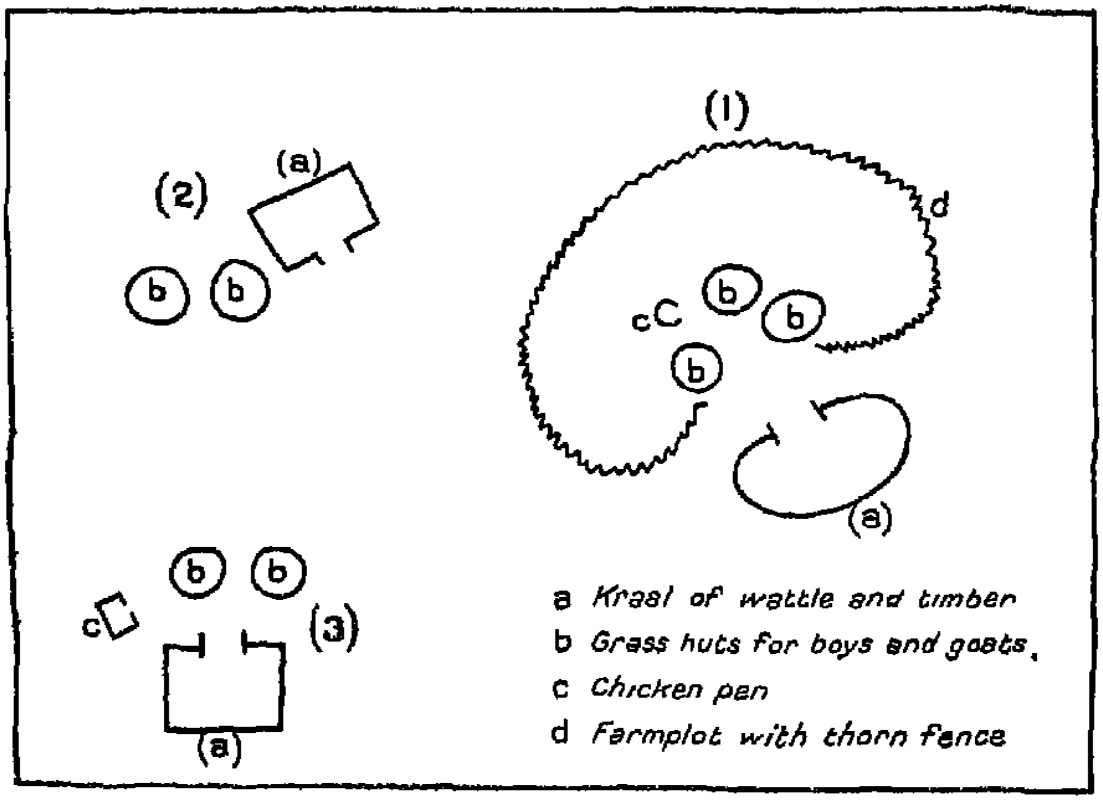
Let me describe the daily life as I observed it in a typical Nuba cattle kraal. It belonged to the hill community of Urila of the Otoro tribe. It was situated in the Kauda Valley, on the land of this hill community, amidst fallow and cultivated fields. It consisted of three encampments, each comprising a number of grass huts and one or two cattle enclosures; one encampment was surrounded by a fenced-in farm plot. The full complement of the camp was ten boys and young men, six of whom were aged eight to ten, i.e. belonged to the age class previous to admittance into the age-grade societies, one belonged to the first, and three to the second and third age-grade. They came from the same village, but from three different clans, the boys belonging to the same clan—and in two cases to the same family as well—staying together in the same encampment. The total number of animals kept in the camp was thirty head of cattle (over half of them bulls) and over 100 sheep and goats. The cattle belonged to six, the goats to eight, different owners.

Early in the morning already you will find the camp deserted, except for three small boys, who are busy cleaning the cattle enclosure. One boy has gone off with the cattle and some of the goats; the rest of the animals are still shut up in the pens until the three boys have finished their work and can take the animals out to graze. One boy has gone to the nearby mission station and Government school to sell some milk; when he returns he will stay in the camp for the day. Two of the older boys had gone to the village last night to fetch food, and have not yet returned. Of the remaining three one is staying in the village for a rest, and two have gone out to help their parents with the farmwork. Cattle and goats had been milked at dawn; food had been cooked in one encampment, and all the boys ate together and warmed themselves over the fire. Then the day's work was planned and the various duties, taken in turn, were assigned for the day—who was going to take out the cattle and who the goats, who was to clean the

huts, and who was to take milk to, or fetch food from, the village.

In the late afternoon the boys return with the animals. Goats, sheep and calves are put away and shut up in the pens, the cattle are left outside until later, when the cows have been milked. Goats are milked only in the morning, cows twice a day. Some boys, who act as cooks, make fire and prepare the evening meal, boiled grain. Others amuse themselves wrestling a little, or playing the flute, or chatting. They all have washed in a creek or waterhole on their way home and look fairly clean; all are

OTORO CATTLE CAMP



rather tired. But there is still plenty of work to be done. Gourds have to be washed and scoured, ready for milking. When it becomes dark, the cows are brought to the fire over which the food is already cooking: first the calves are let out to drink; when they have been put back into their pens, the cows are milked. Two or three boys always work together. They tie up the hind legs of the cow, one boy, squatting underneath squeezes the udder, and another holds the gourd to catch the milk. The milking of a cow takes about ten minutes.[1] The milking finished, the cattle are driven into the enclosure and its gate is barred for the night with logs and thorn. Then the boys sit down to their evening meal. Afterwards they linger a little for a chat or a song, but soon, exhausted from a long day's work, they scatter to their various huts to sleep.

A few words about the use of milk (both cows' and goats' milk) in the

[1] The Otoro cows, rather inferior animals, give about a gourdful (approximately 2 quarts) of thin, blueish milk at each milking.

Nuba tribes. The various groups differ in their appreciation of milk as food. In Otoro, Heiban and Koalib the people have little use for it. The boys and young men in the cattle camps take a little with their meals, adding it to the grain porridge, but never drink it by itself. Only the old men whose strength is failing seem to appreciate milk as such—thick curd, which has been kept for weeks. The boys in the camps collect the milk in large gourds which are kept inside the huts, adding to it every day until they are full; every fortnight or month the gourds are taken to the village and handed over to the owner of the animals. In Tira, Moro, Korongo, and the other 'cow tribes', milk is greatly appreciated, especially as food for boys and young men. It forms part of their regular diet in the cattle camp and is regarded as essential to building up their strength for the strenuous tribal sports.

In one respect, however, all Nuba tribes follow the same practice. A certain quantity of the milk is regularly made into butter, which is used, never for food (only the residue of the watery milk is eaten with grain porridge), but for the decoration of the body. It forms a most important item in the festive dress of the Nuba young men. The finery which they don when going out to a dance or some tribal sport—dried palm leaves tied round arms and legs, a few feathers in the hair, a goatskin round the waist—is incomplete without at least a thin coating of butter on arms, shoulders and head. This is, as I have said, the only use the Nuba tribes make of butter. The quantities of milk needed for it are, as can be imagined, considerable; a stylish milk decoration easily consumes the yield of several days. Yet it is in its very wastefulness that we find the meaning of this fashion. In the word of an Otoro man: 'If you see a boy smeared all over with butter, you know at once that he is the son of a wealthy man, who owns a great many animals.' This explanation holds good for all Nuba tribes. Livestock, then, is wealth, and the 'wasteful' use of its main product a means of displaying wealth. It is easy to see that in the tribes which appreciate the food value of milk the 'wastefulness' of this fashion is even more pronounced than in the groups where milk has little such value. The satisfaction which the 'cow tribes' derive from this telling decoration must be commensurate with its greater expense. If the possession of livestock and all that it entails means more to these tribes, they are also prepared to pay higher value for the display of their possessions. This close correlation of wealth and display will accompany our investigation of Nuba economy like a *leitmotif*.

The Nuba tribes convert very nearly the whole of their agricultural surplus into livestock. Although intertribal trade and exchange have greatly increased in recent times, the exchange of crops for livestock was also practised in pre-Government days. The Otoro, for example, used to buy young bulls from the Koalib (as they, in fact, still do), the Heiban people sheep and goats from Otoro, the Korongo and Mesakin cows from Arabs. But herds were also built up, perhaps even more regularly, by the less peaceful means of raids into the territories and settlements of

neighbouring tribes or hill communities. This was an accepted and highly respectable method of enriching oneself. Some of the captured animals were slaughtered and eaten; the rest were added to one's herds.[1]

Once acquired, livestock—especially full-grown cattle—is almost never sold for money or produce;[2] nor is it slaughtered merely for the sake of food. Frequently, however, people exchange one kind of livestock for another—goats for bulls, or bulls for cows—for the purpose of certain standardized payments like bride-price or gifts to relations which stipulate a particular kind of livestock.

The exchange values of livestock are fixed fairly uniformly in the Nuba Mountains. A cow is valued at fifteen to twenty goats; a castrated he-goat or ram at two to three goats; a sheep at two goats. A fully grown goat, the common unit for calculating exchange value, is reckoned as the equivalent of one large basket of grain or half a basket of simsim, worth 20 piastres in modern money. We note one significant exception in the uniform valuation: in most groups cows are much more valuable than bulls, one cow being worth very nearly or exactly two bulls (even a little more in Moro); in Heiban and Otoro, however, the two groups which prefer bulls to cows and show little appreciation of milk, bulls and cows are of equal value.

In the Nuba tribes, as in all societies, the character of wealth is largely conventional. But the tendency to convert, as the Nuba do, a perishable surplus like agricultural produce into a permanent one like livestock (of any kind), must be regarded as a paramount economic motive. The conversion into livestock does more than merely transform perishable into permanent surplus; it produces a form of wealth which multiplies and bears interest (in the form of offspring and milk), like the modern capital investment. But Nuba economy does not attempt to realize these potentialities to the full, and in the case of the 'bull tribes' even denies their very essence. Nowhere do we find the steady building-up of large herds which is typical of most herdsmen tribes in Africa. On the contrary, herds hardly grow to a certain size when they dwindle and disappear again. The livestock property of individuals in the Nuba tribes varies widely and changes rapidly—so widely and rapidly that it becomes impossible to calculate a statistical average or to compile a census that would not be misleading. In a census undertaken in Otoro I recorded individual properties of 3, 5, 15, 20, 30 and 50 goats and 0, 1, 3, 5, 7 head of cattle; in Tira, of 4, 5, 8, 10 and 60 goats and 0, 1, 2, 4, 15 head of cattle; the figures in Korongo and Mesakin

[1] Although cattle stealing, on a small scale, has not entirely ceased, it has completely changed its meaning. It is no longer safe to put the stolen animals with one's herds, where they would be easily discovered. The modern Nuba cattle thief slaughters the captured animals at once, often even before he has reached his village, somewhere out in the bush, taking only the cut-up meat home to divide it later among relatives and friends.

[2] Of sixty households in Otoro, Tira and Heiban which I examined in 1938 only five had sold animals that year—four goats and one pig—in order to pay tax or fines.

(considering here cattle only) were 1, 4, 7, 12, 28 and 2, 3, 5, 10, 20, 30 respectively. Moreover, your pauper of this year's census may have been a wealthy man only a year or two ago. Indeed, in the eyes of the people he may still be a 'big', wealthy man. For he did own large herds once, and if he is now stripped of his property, he lost it in the respected, traditional fashion, in obedience to certain demands of custom which in themselves proclaim his wealth.

Even more strongly than Nuba farming economy, Nuba livestock economy is characterized by that trend to display and at the same time rapidly dispose of wealth and surplus. There are many such institutionalized, customary, demands upon the livestock property of Nuba men. We can group them under three headings. First, we have the payments in livestock entailed in kinship obligations towards sons, sister-sons and other close relatives, whose bride-price one must pay or to whom one must make certain gifts. Though greatly varying in value, the bride-price is universal in the Nuba Mountains. It may include the exchange of gifts between relations, as in Otoro, Tira, and Heiban, where several relatives contribute to and in turn share in the bride-price payments. In Korongo and Mesakin these kinship obligations take the form of gifts of cattle by mother-brothers to sister-sons at their 'coming of age'. A second category comprises the slaughtering of animals at the celebration of kinship ceremonies, e.g. family or clan sacrifices and funeral feasts. The latter, above all, involve heavy expenditure on the part of the heirs (as in Korongo, Mesakin, or Koalib), which may well reduce a large inheritance to practically nothing. Expenditure for the sake of prestige is our final heading. It refers to the slaughtering of livestock (especially bulls) at special ceremonies, by means of which individuals gain prestige and attain a higher status. Such ceremonies are the *narma* and *nirowa* in Otoro and Heiban, the cicatrization ceremony in Otoro and Tira, and the circumcision of old men in Tira.

The detailed description of these gifts, celebrations and ceremonies must be left till later. Here we may say that the scale of expenditure corresponds in every case to the wealth of the individual (not excluding bride-price, though its amount is more rigidly standardized). The expenditure is a true indication of the accumulated wealth—as it is a true means of its dissipation. But the dissipation may be brought about by two widely different methods. One represents essentially a transfer of wealth (e.g. in bride-price and kinship gifts), the other a destruction of wealth (through sacrifices and slaughtering). Although the two methods occur side by side in all Nuba tribes, they are employed in a characteristically varying proportion in different groups. In Otoro, Heiban, Koalib (the 'bull tribes') and Tira the aspect of 'destruction' predominates. The ceremonies for the sake of prestige are performed repeatedly, whenever a man has accumulated wealth to any considerable extent. The aspect of destruction reveals itself most fully in the *narma* and *nirowa* ceremonies just mentioned: for here the animals killed are

bulls which are kept and fattened up for years merely to be slaughtered ceremonially on these occasions. In Nyima and Dilling the 'transfer' aspect is pronounced more strongly. The bride-price in these two tribes is extremely high and consists almost entirely of cattle (which cannot be replaced by other forms of payment); in Nyima the payments are carried on for two or even three generations. The killing of animals at kinship feasts or funerals is on a comparatively small scale, while gifts of live animals to tribal priests (who will never kill these animals) play an important part in the life of these tribes. The remaining tribes are of a mixed type. In Korongo and Mesakin, for example, the 'transfer' of animals involved in kinship obligations appears balanced by the lavish 'destruction' of cattle at funeral feasts.

The conception of wealth as expressed in livestock and especially cattle varies widely in different tribes. Six to eight head of cattle (or the equivalent in goats) in Otoro and Tira, and eight to ten in Nyima and Heiban, constitute already 'real wealth', while in Moro a man needs ten to fifteen, in Mesakin and Dilling fifteen to twenty, and in Korongo no less than twenty to thirty head of cattle to qualify for the attribute 'wealthy'. As we can see there is no correlation between this assessment of wealth and the other, more abstract, evaluation implied in the two cultural demands for 'destruction' and 'transfer' of livestock. Sharply distinct though these two demands are in themselves, they clearly act as identical motives in the production of wealth and in tribal economy at large. Their effect, familiar to us from the examination of Nuba farming, must be twofold: display and public recognition provide strong incentives for the production and accumulation of surplus; its repeated dissipation or destruction at the same time tends to prevent the emergence of permanent economic inequality.

Before we examine these effects more closely and approach our final question, the general efficiency of Nuba economy, we must first consider the remaining methods by which wealth is produced and distributed—native industry and trade.

Property, Industries, Exchange

The property which the Nuba people possess besides farmland and livestock is quickly described. A visit to a native house will show you all, or nearly all. There is, first, the house itself, consisting of a number of huts built of mud, or stone, or wattle, and thatched with grass. A stack of firewood outside; inside, farming tools hanging from the roof or on the wall; spears, axes, and sometimes a gun; baskets, pots, and gourds in the hut where the woman does her cooking or stores the food; finally, the bedstead—either the primitive native plank-bed or the more up-to-date Arab-copied *angreb*. Add to this list what the people wear on their bodies—beads, bangles and other ornaments, both of men and women, and their clothes, varying from nothing to the voluminous Arab *tob*—and you have the total of Nuba property.

Viewed from the angle of origin and production this inventory of Nuba property comprises self-produced goods; goods produced in the community, but not in every household (i.e. the products of specialized craftsmen); and goods produced outside the individual community or even outside Nuba culture at large. This classification is fluid and subject to constant change. Modern conditions, especially, are re-drawing the division between these three categories of production and re-defining their relative position in the economic life of the group. We remember the wooden hoes and digging sticks which every Nuba farmer could manufacture for himself and which are now being replaced by iron-bladed hoes bought in shops and on markets. The Korongo women still use shells for cutting simsim; presumably they will soon follow their sisters in the other hills, who are using knives with iron blades. Side by side with the old Nuba weapons, spears, and shields we find the 'modern' Remington rifle, which has become a common object of internal Nuba trade and exchange. Every household can produce the native plank-bed, which consists of narrow, crudely planed, wooden boards resting on sticks placed across forked posts; to-day the more comfortable *angreb* has largely replaced this crude bedstead; made of interlaced ropes or strips of hide which are tied over a square wooden frame standing on four legs, its manufacture may involve the purchase of palm-fibre ropes, and often people would buy the whole bed from Nuba craftsmen who have specialized in this work. The original dress of the Nuba women was, again, completely self-manufactured—of bark-cloth, hide or strips of leather; you can still see it on older women; but the younger generation has adopted new fashions, showing a lavish display of buttons, beads, brass-wire, or coloured cloth. Food habits, too, offer instances of this kind. Thus salt was obtained, in the native fashion, by filtering water through the fine sand found on the surface of dried-up river beds, or through the ashes of burnt refuse and maize stalks; to-day most tribes buy their salt (or for that matter sugar, and even tea or coffee) in the Arab shops.

These examples could be multiplied almost indefinitely. The most important traditional payment, bride-price, has come to include more and more commodities which can no longer be obtained by self-production. With axe-heads and spear-points we have now to list oil in bottles bought in shops (Tira), rifles (Heiban), or articles of clothing (Dilling). The most recent changes and the adoption of modern imported goods are easy enough to define. But it is not equally easy to state with any certainty to what extent the Nuba household or Nuba economy in general were self-sufficient under traditional conditions. The extent of this self-sufficiency varied, of course, in different communities with the intensity of intertribal contacts, and above all with the degree of assimilation to Arab culture which the community achieved. In some measure, it seems, even the most primitive and isolated communities had been dependent on import and outside production as far back as the people can remember.

This breach in their self-sufficiency centred round iron, which the Nuba tribes have never produced themselves and had to import from Arabs and Daju. Although, for example, ebony-pointed spears, self-produced, are still in use in many tribes, iron spear-points were most probably long since used besides. The same is true of axe-heads, the ceremonial throwing knives of the Tira and Nyima, and various metal ornaments, such as the iron spiral cuffs, rings, or bangles worn by the tribal priests in the northern hills. The antiquity of these 'imports' is borne out by the fact that spear-points and axe-heads form in many groups part of the traditional bride-price and that throwing knives and iron ornaments have acquired ritual significance. In Tullishi we find another interesting ancient use of iron, in the form of ceremonial hoes and spear-points which are used primarily for bride-price payments (the hoes are, in fact, called 'marriage hoes') and represent, not tools and weapons, but symbols of wealth. They are collected, kept, and inherited like other valuable property. At burial feasts the people marching in the funeral procession beat these hoes and spear-points like musical instruments, exhibiting in this fashion publicly their treasured possessions.

This ancient appreciation of iron has clearly two different aspects. Iron is appreciated for its usefulness as a material for tools and weapons, but also, in a more abstract fashion, for its rarity—much as is gold in our own civilization. We shall see that the combination of these two qualities of iron, imperishable nature and rarity, fit iron objects for the role of standard units of exchange in Nuba economy.

The scarcity of iron in the Nuba Mountains is, in a sense, artificial. It is essentially a result of the difficult intertribal relations, the permanent state of suspicion and active hostility that existed between the different Nuba tribes and between Nuba and Arabs. There were ways and means to circumvent these difficulties for the purpose of intertribal trade, but they functioned only within a very limited scope. The people of Tullishi, who had to obtain iron from their bitter enemies, the Daju (in exchange for native-grown cotton), evolved an interesting institution to reconcile tribal feuds with economic interdependence. The two tribes would agree periodically to a four days' truce, heralded by the common sacrifice of a pig by their two chiefs, during which bartering went on unhindered and the people of the two tribes could visit each other in safety.[1] In other tribes intertribal trade was carried on under the auspices of the 'big man' of the community, who would extend his protection to foreigners who came to trade with his people (*see* p. 310).

To-day the Nuba peoples buy their iron goods or whatever they need from itinerant Arab traders or in the town shops. Arab craftsmen, especially blacksmiths, have, moreover, settled in many Nuba communities. Though the modern change from self-sufficiency (in a tribal sense) to dependence on imports is more widespread, the converse process can

[1] The Tullishi people also used to buy giraffe skins for their shields from the Daju and Arabs.

also be observed. In many Nuba groups native craftsmen are now practising industries which were formerly the monopoly of foreigners. The Arab daggers worn on the arm, for example, which are common throughout the Nuba Mountains, are to-day manufactured in many hills by Nuba craftsmen. The manufacture of *angrebs* or sandals has nearly everywhere become a local industry. In a few Arab-influenced hills the women have adopted mat-weaving. In Tullishi I found two weavers, who had learned their craft fairly recently from the Daju. This last instance is of special interest. The Tullishi used to buy the Arab *jubba*, which they now like to wear, from Daju weavers; the garments were woven of indigenous cotton, which the Tullishi people grew, ginned, and spun, and bartered for iron to Daju. This twofold export and re-import of (in modern terminology) raw material and finished product is now being reduced in favour of a more complete tribal self-sufficiency.

The growing tribal self-sufficiency has enlarged the scope of native industries, but has not contributed to the self-sufficiency of the individual household. The new techniques are in the hands of expert craftsmen—individuals who (to quote Nuba informants) are 'clever with their fingers', and who have shown special interest and keenness with regard to handicrafts. Though the balance between self-produced goods and the products of specialized industries has thus been altered in favour of the latter by modern changes, it seems certain that Nuba economy never attempted to achieve a complete self-sufficiency of the individual household. One or two specialized handicrafts have always existed, though on a very small, individual scale. Nowhere are there traces of a professional organization or of the tendency of crafts to become hereditary.

Rather, craftsmanship appears irregularly, as a result of the inclinations and the cleverness of certain individuals which, once they become known, are utilized by others who are not so 'clever with their fingers'. Everybody can, in theory, make baskets or beer-strainers; but in most groups we find 'experts' to whom people would go for these things in preference to making them (much less satisfactorily) themselves. The same is true of the manufacture of native stools, *angrebs*, and certain musical instruments like the Nuba lyre or wooden drums (the skin is fixed by the owner himself). The list of self-produced goods, on the other hand, comprises the old (wooden) farming tools and spears, shields, sticks, the handles of hoes and axes, the old-type plank-bed, simpler musical instruments like flutes, animal horns, or gourd trumpets, and, finally, the native house, complete with roof and granaries. But again we must emphasize the fluid nature of this distinction. It is characteristic, for example, that in the tribes which possess a rather elaborate type of house—Korongo and Mesakin—'experts' may also be employed in house-building, the experts being men who are known to be good builders —better builders than the prospective owners of the house. The Mesakin house, incidentally, boasts a certain elaborate gadget which comes to some extent into this discussion. It represents a primitive system of 'running

water', which consists of a gourd bowl filled with water and perforated a little below the rim, resting on two antelope horns which are fixed high up on the wall of the hut; you hold your hands under the bowl, pull a string which is tied to the rim of the gourd, thus tipping it over, and a stream of water spouts through the hole on to your hands. Now, the antelope horns which enable the gourd to slide easily up and down, and which thus form an essential part of this outfit, were formerly 'self-produced', i.e. easily obtainable on an occasional hunt. Scarcity of game has altered this, and to-day owners of new houses have to buy the horns from outside (from the Dinka).

The only craft practised on a larger scale and implying to some extent the conception of a group profession is a woman's craft—pottery. In every tribe we find large numbers of women potters. The technique varies but slightly in different hills. The wet white clay is beaten and shaped in shallow moulds of hardened clay sunk in the ground. Powdered leaves are placed into the mould first to prevent the wet clay from sticking to it. The finished pot is dried, scraped with a stone and burned in the ashes of cow dung and grass. Some women paint their pots with red clay. Different tribes or even different hill communities of the same tribe often specialize in different kinds of pots. In Otoro, for example, the women of the hill communities Kodi and Urila manufacture large, flat, dish-shaped pots, the women of Chungur specialize in round, spherical pots, and the women of Kujur in tall, wide-mouthed urns. Simple grass huts and palm-leaf shelters serve as workshops. In Tira I found a large 'factory', numbering about fifty moulds of all shapes and sizes, laid out on a rocky ledge some distance from the homesteads, close to the place where the women obtain the red clay for painting. The site was shared by six women each of whom had her own eight to ten moulds. The factory occasionally turns into a school for potters. For (grown-up) women can come and watch the experts at work; they can help with the simpler tasks and will be instructed—free of charge—in the more difficult ones, till they have thoroughly mastered the technique and are ready to open a workshop of their own. Otherwise the craft is handed on from mother to daughter.

The products of handicrafts, native or imported, are paid for in grain, simsim or some other marketable produce (tobacco, red pepper), in hoes, spears, axe-heads, goats and, to-day, increasingly in money. We must add that these same forms of payment are also employed in the case of the other services of 'experts' of which the Nuba tribes avail themselves, treatment by a medicine-man or -woman, the consultation of a tribal priest, circumcision and tattooing, and such like. The Nuba exchange economy thus reveals itself as a system in which nearly every item can serve both as commodity and as payment. In other words, we discover no specific exchange units designed for payment and nothing else, nothing comparable to a currency. The isolated instance of the bride-price hoes of Tullishi is the nearest approach to currency which Nuba

economy has evolved. But the bride-price hoes represent a very specialized tender, with limited application, rather than a general currency. For although these hoes may be used for other payments beside bride-price, their high value (equivalent to 20 piastres in money) unfits them for the common, everyday transactions. We note that this pseudo-currency is made of iron—the rare, 'precious' metal of the Nuba Mountains.

This comprehensive coincidence of means of exchange and commodities can only work in an economy in which the relative values of all marketable goods are stable and well standardized. We have already seen that this is true of the exchange of livestock for agricultural produce; it is equally true of the products of native industry: spear-points are always valued at 5 piastres or the equivalent in grain or simsim; axe-heads, at 10 piastres; arm-knives at 8 piastres; hoe-blades, according to size, at 2–5 piastres; and so forth.[1]

This far-reaching standardization of the value of commodities presents an interesting theoretical problem, for it shows the absence from this primitive economy of the classical economic determinant, the balance of supply and demand. Exchange values vary a little in accordance with the size and quality of the commodity. But fluctuations owing to changes in the relation of supply to demand, of means to satisfy needs to the needs themselves, are unknown. Seasonal price variations in food crops, for example, are a new thing, due entirely to the influence of the urban centres in the Nuba area, and still limited to tribes in their vicinity.[2]

In the case of imported iron implements, the explanation of the stable exchange value lies in their, as it were, controlled scarcity in the Nuba area, of which we have spoken before. Characteristically, the price of iron tools has dropped with the disappearance of tribal warfare and the establishment of 'free trade'.[3] But the situation is different in the case of agricultural produce. We have spoken of failure of crops, shortages of food stores, local famines—all typical instances of that changing balance of supply and demand which, in other societies, causes fluctuation of market value. Let me try to explain why they do not have the same result in Nuba economy. Here the mechanism of supply and demand is never brought into play because there is no incentive to part with surplus beyond a certain point (the limit to which one would normally go in converting agricultural surplus into some other commodity), even for an unusually favourable exchange. In Nuba culture the use of surplus is fixed for every commodity, and the satisfaction one may derive, say, from a filled granary with its special celebrations is of a unique nature, irreplaceable by the gain in some other property, like livestock

[1] The various objects may figure in the same compound payment, so and so many spears, axe-heads, and gourds of grain or simsim adding up to the desired total.

[2] An example are the Korongo and Moro tribes, which have learned to profit from the market demands of Talodi Town. The spreading cotton cultivation is making the concept of price fluctuations more familiar among the Nuba.

[3] Spears, for example, the present market price of which is 5 piastres, used to be worth 7 piastres.

or spears. Generally speaking, surplus and needs never meet in direct exchange. They meet only indirectly, through the medium of some of the uses laid down for surplus, harvest feasts and similar public expenditure, or through the channels of the kinship obligation to help needy relatives.

The picture of this static economy is complete if we add that it never evolved markets—places, that is, designed to render visible and bring into play the balance of supply and demand. The Nuba producer—craftsman or agriculturist—will as a rule work to order and wait for the customers to come to him.[1] Occasionally you may meet women hawking pots or beer-strainers; or a man who has a goat to sell may take it to a settlement where, as he knows, some big feast is going to be performed for which animals may be wanted. But the price which they will ask will be the same as that which they would have charged had the customers come to them. The fact that they brought their goods to the doorstep of the consumer does not enter in the calculation of exchange value and profit, for time and distance have no economic value in Nuba economy. Indeed, the absence of an economic appreciation of time and distance is an essential element in the pattern of this primitive economy, in which exchange values are kept stable and markets and professional trade, both bound up with the economic utilization of time and distance, have no place.

Recently the Administration introduced markets in various Nuba districts. They amount, so far, to shops rather than to markets proper: Arab merchants put up their booths, offering their various goods for sale and buying produce from the Nuba people, who can now sell their surplus grain or simsim, or buy beads or hoe-blades, in their own hills instead of having to wander to the nearest town. The markets have not attracted any internal Nuba trade, nor, in fact, do they seem likely to. Quite apart from the fact that the Arab type of shop-market is not conducive to stimulating internal tribal trade, Nuba economy does not (or not yet) seem to warrant a special exchange-institution of this kind. Most informants whom I asked whether, for example, the internal exchange in livestock might not later be conducted through these markets gave as their opinion that this would never happen, as livestock was not disposed of just at any time, but only when one was in need of money or some other commodity for a special purpose. In other words, the supply of marketable commodities is still too small, too irregular, and both supply and demand are too closely bound up with specific exchange needs.[2]

The combination of the two main characteristics of Nuba exchange

[1] Potters, whose work is largely seasonal, being more or less restricted to the dry season, and who can anticipate a regular demand for their products, sometimes lay in larger stores before the rains begin.

[2] It may be mentioned that the Arab merchants who undertook to hold these markets frequently complained of the scanty supplies of native produce that were offered for sale. The native market at Heiban, where the Nuba now sell fairly regularly livestock and beer (which is nowhere else bought and sold), seems an exception. The Nuba find their regular customers in the large police post of that place, so that here again the market does not serve internal exchange.

economy, the identity of exchange units and commodities, and the specific, non-interchangeable, nature of the gains derived from the exchange, places it on the level of a primitive, inflexible system of barter of the kind that economic textbooks illustrate by examples like the following classical advertisement:

> 'Gentleman wishes to exchange hairbrushes, silver-backed, for portable typewriter.'

For the gentleman of this advertisement as for his Nuba confrère who contemplates an exchange, the success of the transaction depends on the exact correspondence of the two needs which are to be matched. In our example, the owner of the hairbrushes would prefer the direct exchange to selling his property first and buying the coveted typewriter later with the money, because the latter method is apt to involve a loss. His Nuba counterpart was, in the past, unable to use this method because no such universal currency existed; but even to-day he would rarely adopt it (although, with exchange values fixed, he need fear no loss) because there is too little money about. His alternative to the opportune direct exchange is a circuitous exchange which would lead, through several barter deals, to an exact correspondence of offer and demand. Thus a Tira man who wanted to buy a knife from a local blacksmith offered him first a pig or a puppy in exchange; when the blacksmith declined both and asked for tobacco instead, the would-be customer sold his puppy to an Otoro man for tobacco, with which he paid for the knife. Young men who go to work as labourers in the towns in order to procure their bride-price would often buy a bull or two locally with their wages first, because they are easy to drive home to the hills, and exchange them there for the goats stipulated in the bride-price—a circuitous exchange which shows that even money may only serve as a link in this chain of barter transactions.

As we see, the onus of the circuitous exchange falls on the 'bidder', i.e. the more urgently interested partner in the exchange deal. The length to which he may have to go is the only indication of the relative urgency of the two needs which meet in the transaction. It is not expressed in the final exchange and in the balance of the exchange values. The deviousness of the exchange is not counted as a 'loss' or as increased 'cost', the saving of which might be worth an extra expense by the one side, nor as an opportunity for making profit by the other. The only gain, to both sides, is that of acquiring eventually the desired commodity. The conception of profit in our modern sense as something you can, as it were, 'put into your pocket'—as a value gained over and above, and abstracted from, the concrete *quid pro quo* of the exchange—is wholly alien to Nuba economy. This is visible in the whole outlook of the people, in that, to some, puzzling attitude which occasional observers would describe as a 'lack of economic sense'. What we find is, in reality, a wholly consistent 'economic sense', moving on the plane of a narrow, strict conception

of exchange. Once we realize this, it is no longer puzzling to find that the people are ready to sell you spears, hoes, or other native products for the same price they themselves had to pay (or will have to pay when they replace these objects);[1] that in litigations over property one would always go back to the original purchase price; or that rifles—the most valuable single property in the Nuba Hills—are invariably exchanged for their original value (in spite of the fact that they are more and more difficult to obtain). This outlook reveals itself perhaps most strikingly in a simple, almost habitual reaction like the following: a Tira man who had returned from a distant village with ten cakes of tobacco which he had bought for himself was asked by another man, who was neither his friend nor his relative, to sell him two of them; after some discussion, he agreed to part with the tobacco—for the original price. I may add that when I suggested to him he might have charged more, especially as he had brought the tobacco from far away, he simply did not understand my argument.

The example quoted above of a circuitous exchange leading from money *via* goats to bride-price cattle shows the small extent to which money, in some Nuba groups at least, has conquered the native economic system. Money is not yet fully conceived of as a universal currency, but rather as a (modern) specific tender—somewhat like the bride-price hoes of Tullishi—valid primarily for certain specific demands. These modern specific demands are tax and, occasionally, legal fines. Once they have been satisfied, the main incentive to depart from strict exchange economy seems to disappear. The use of money is visibly increasing, especially in the purchase of goods in shops and markets; but even here the merchants also allow barter, at least indirectly, by first buying the produce of their would-be customers. A number of customary services (e.g. tattooing, circumcision, the ministrations of medicine-men or priests) may nowadays be paid for in money as well as in kind. The products of native handicrafts also admit of this double system of payment. Yet the culturally most important exchange-demands still exclude conversion into money. Bride-price is a typical instance, although, as we have heard, it has come to include various new commodities which can be bought with money.[2]

The institution of the bride-price thus shows itself resistant, not to modernization in general, but only to absorption by the modern money economy. To attribute this selective tenacity simply to the 'conservatism' of the people or to some 'cultural inertia' is clearly not sufficient. Indeed, we discover a specific motive behind this tenacity of custom. We may argue that since wealth in the Nuba Mountains is invested in special commodities—above all, livestock—and since the bride-price is partly spent again in the form of livestock (in feasts, sacrifices, gifts to relations),

[1] Occasionally I was even offered such objects at a reduced price, because they were no longer new and thus not worth the full market value.

[2] In Nyima, where long-term hired labour and other modern occupations have proved highly attractive to the young men, the customary farm service for prospective parents-in-law may be redeemed by payments of money. The bride-price itself, however, is still paid in livestock.

the complete replacement of the traditional bride-price by money payments would oblige the recipient to engage in that circuitous exchange which is normally the task of the 'bidder'. Now economically, this change of roles would mean very little, if anything. But in the social and moral sphere its effects would be revolutionary. For it would eliminate what we have called the only indication of the relative urgency of the two needs meeting in the exchange transaction. It would thus reverse the position of suitor and bride's parents; it would confuse the whole concept of marriage and courtship, which is bound up with the sharp moral distinction of the two sides—one as applying and bidding, the other as granting and demanding.

We will conclude this section with a few words on the most modern addition to Nuba economy—hired labour and paid work. Regular and long-term employment, in various occupations, in the towns of Kordofan and the Sudan at large, which would entail many years' absence from home, is not very widespread. This kind of work is sought on a considerable scale only by a few, more sophisticated tribes (e.g. Nyima, Dilling, Heiban, Tabak), though isolated cases may be met with in practically every hill. The motives which lead the people—mostly the young men of the tribe—to take up this alien work are, above all, the necessity of finding the bride-price and the ambition to acquire at least the foundations of a fortune. Other, more subtle, psychological incentives vary widely from hill to hill, such as the desire to wander about and see the world, or to live the attractive life of soldiers or police, who seem to have everything one can desire—a rifle, a horse, and a splendid uniform.

Day labour, on the other hand, in nearby towns or on the cotton plantations of Arab merchants, is almost universal in the Nuba Mountains. It is undertaken both by adults and young men, and occasionally even by women and girls. The money made is used primarily for the payment of tax or fines. Though these special money expenses are also met with from the sale of produce or livestock, hired labour is the source *par excellence* for these payments. It is, in fact, true to say that in the minds of the people the two are closely linked: the modern and, as it were, additional expenditure, and the modern and 'additional' form of production. In taxing the wealth or income of these tribes, we are really taxing their ability to produce a value over and above their traditional wealth and customary income.

Efficiency and Prospects of Nuba Economy

We can assess the efficiency of Nuba economy against the three classes of demands which it must satisfy: first, the primary necessities of livelihood (food, shelter, clothing), including the 'working capital' on which production depends (tools, seed-crops, fodder for animals—actually a negligible item—and a certain surplus to be spent on 'financing' group labour); second, obligatory customary expenses (e.g. bride-price, gifts to relations, certain family sacrifices); and third, certain voluntary but

equally institutionalized expenses, designed to enhance individual prestige (the financing of harvest feasts, cicatrization and circumcision ceremonies, and suchlike). A final category of demands must be assigned an intermediate position between 'necessities' and voluntary expenditure for the sake of prestige; I am referring to such fluid forms of expenditure as that spent on a larger or more sumptuous house, on more expensive and more impressive clothes or ornaments, on a rifle in addition to spears and clubs, a horse in addition to 'necessary' livestock—in one word, on the luxuries of life.

Even the 'obligatory customary expenses' are in some degree elastic. The scale of gifts between relations varies with economic capacity; sacrifices can be postponed if sufficient livestock is unavailable at the moment; and if a father or mother-brother is unable to produce the whole of the bride-price, the payment is allowed to devolve on other relatives or the young bridegroom himself. Only the 'primary necessities' can be regarded as rigid economic demands. The standard of these primary necessities as conceived of by the people is strikingly low. We may say that only because these primary necessities are kept so low, Nuba economy can maintain its ambitious standards of the demands made upon wealth.

Otoro informants calculated for me the lowest subsistence level for a family of four, man and wife and two children; expressed in the staple crop of the country, grain, it amounts to an annual consumption of twelve 'baskets' (of about 150 lb. each). This total includes a very modest expenditure on beer, amounting to three 'baskets' of grain, which would enable the family head to engage group labour two or three times a year. The amount left for food proper is thus nine 'baskets', or 1,350 lb. This figure tallies with the data which I obtained independently in an investigation of nutrition in Otoro, Tira, and Heiban. I found that the average amount of grain used in one meal for a family of this size is 3 lb.[1] Families living very close to the subsistence level would eat only eight to nine meals a week, using about 26 lb. of grain per week or 1,352 lb. per annum. Beans, maize, groundnuts (for the children), or bullrush millet periodically enlarge the daily ration. Simsim, and the oil extracted from it, an equally important staple food, can only partly be used for consumption; for they also serve as a medium of exchange to purchase tobacco or salt or to replenish and renew the supply of tools, pots, baskets, &c. A certain proportion of the simsim crop, moreover, may have to be used for tax-money, which amounts in these hills to 20 piastres, or half a (large) basket of simsim.

Occasionally individual households fail to reach even this lowest standard of necessities. People in this position will have to eat their seed-grain, and will be dependent on the help of relations, or on the money they can make as labourers, to keep them above water. A typical instance: a Tira man, about forty-five years of age, with one wife and two small children, produced in 1938 only four baskets of grain; he owned, besides, four goats and one bull. To obtain money for tax, he

[1] *See* Appendix II.

worked as day labourer in Talodi; his brother gave him two goats with which to buy grain (two 'baskets'), so that six 'baskets' had to see him through the year. When I asked a well-to-do neighbour of his with whom I had discussed this case how this man could live on so little, the neighbour shrugged his shoulders and said: 'Why not? He is a pauper.' The concept of poverty is indeed fully realized in the Nuba tribes. It is tinged with that consciousness of distance and the slight contempt towards someone whose standard of living is greatly inferior to one's own which is typical of all societies where poverty and wealth are accepted realities.

Income and expenditure above the subsistence level represents, in varying degree, wealth—a surplus that can be devoted to the various cultural demands, to expenditure for the sake of prestige, or the purchase of 'luxuries'. We have spoken already of the specific and unique nature of the various uses to which surplus can be put. No general rule can thus be formulated as to which of a number of competing demands will be satisfied before others. The answer to this question will vary with the concrete case, with individual predilection, with the composition of the family (i.e. the number of sons who have to be married off), or with the urgency of certain irregular and unpredictable demands (e.g. sacrifices because of illness, funeral feasts, &c.). It will be best to illustrate this complex situation by concrete instances of household budgets. I have selected three examples, typical of moderately prosperous households in Otoro, Tira, and Heiban.

1. *Otoro*

Household consists of man, middle-aged, two wives, four children.

Farm produce (in 'baskets'):	Grain, Maize, Beans } 12	
	Groundnuts, 3	
	Simsim, 2	
Livestock:	Goats, 14	2 bulls and 13 goats killed at cicatrization; 1 goat and 2 pigs sacrificed when wife was ill.
	Cattle, 2	
	Pigs, 3	
Other income:	Man went to work in Talodi for tax-money	

2. *Tira*

Household consists of man, middle-aged, one wife, no children.

Farm produce:	Grain, Maize, Beans } 16	Three sold to Arab merchant for 90 piastres.
	Simsim, 2	
	Cotton, 2 sacks	Cotton sold for £E.1.
	Tobacco: enough for own use.	

Livestock:	Goats, 8 Cattle, 1	1 bull and 9 goats killed last year at cicatrization; 1 young bull bought this year with money made on grain and cotton.

Other income: Man made 90 piastres working as labourer in Talodi.

3. *Heiban*

Household consists of man, middle-aged, one wife, three children.

Farm produce:	Grain, Maize, Beans } 20 Groundnuts, 2 Simsim, 1	Sold 5 to man of the same village for 4 goats and 20 piastres, the money being used for tax.
Livestock:	Goats, 7 Cattle, 0 Pigs, 2	Will have to pay 5 goats and rifle this year as bride-price for eldest son.
Other property:	Rifle, 1	
Other income:	Nil	

A general census of production and standards of living in these tribes would at any given moment reveal considerable individual variations, ranging over the whole scale from real poverty to real wealth. In the following chart I have summarized the findings of an examination of sixty households (reduced to the main crops):

Tribe	*Produce*		*Households with:*			
			1 *wife*	2 *wives*	3 *wives*	4 *wives*
Tira	Grain, maize, beans (in 'baskets')	Minimum	4	6	16	28
		Maximum	20	15	25	30
		Average	10	14	—	—
	Simsim	Minimum	—	½	—	2
		Maximum	2	2	—	6
		Average	0·7	1½	3	—
Otoro	Grain, maize, beans	Minimum	7	9	—	—
		Maximum	10	20	—	—
		Average	9	14	33	15
	Simsim	Minimum	—	—	2	—
		Maximum	—	2	3	—
		Average	1	1½	—	2
Heiban	Grain, maize, beans	Minimum	10	13	24	—
		Maximum	22	28	26	—
		Average	13	20	—	—
	Simsim	Minimum	½	1	—	—
		Maximum	3	4	—	—
		Average	2	3	3	—

In interpreting these figures we must remember the transitory nature of these inequalities in production and property and the tendency to level out accumulated surplus by means of spectacular expenditure. The distinction of poverty and wealth and the various grades on the economic scale are not obviated by this fact; but they are transferred to the conceptual plane of prestige. In other words, wealth itself, in the concrete sense, is soon spent and thus levelled out, but the status and prestige which lavish expenditure once bought remain.

But even this abstract gain is, in a sense, transitory. For prestige and status are not hereditary. They lend their glamour to individuals only, and the social privileges which they embody cannot be shared by successive generations. Sons wear the symbols of their father's wealth on their body; they may benefit from his prosperous position in various ways—while his wealth, in the concrete sense, lasts. But to have been the son of a man who has undergone cicatrization or acquired renown through his lavish feasts entails no social privileges and no specially favoured start in life. With regard to the social advancement that can be derived from wealth no less than to wealth itself, Nuba society remains true to its 'levelling' and (shall we say?) 'democratic' spirit.

We have still to consider the impact of change on this balance of means and demands. We have already described the new demands which are gradually entering the orbit of tribal economy. They follow a typical course: they appear first as vaguely desirable 'luxuries' and as voluntary expenditure bound up with prestige; they drift down, through the stratum of well-established fashion, towards the basic layer of primary necessities. The native standards of desirability are formed in gradual assimilation to the more highly developed material culture of the Arabs and the urban centres of the Sudan. In a Nuba group where people still go naked or scantily clothed, the possession of Arab dress is regarded as a sign of distinction; among people armed with clubs and spears, the possession of a rifle becomes, quite apart from its usefulness, a symbol of wealth and success; and where the people still adhere to the 'primitive' Nuba diet, a host who can offer his guests tea and sugar is acclaimed as a leading figure in social life. All this is true, in varying degree, even of the minor appendages of Western civilization, such as teapots, glasses, mirrors, or deck-chairs, which have found their way into the Nuba Mountains.[1] Certain of these new demands have already become elementary necessities in many groups—such as the use of salt, some kind of (as least rudimentary)

[1] It will be understood that our interpretation holds good only since these new alien values have really been endorsed by the Nuba tribes—that is, since (as I put it) the Nuba standards of desirability have in fact been formed in gradual assimilation. In a group which never deviated from its belief, say, in going naked, a man dressed *à la arabe* would merely be regarded as eccentric. Tullishi supplies once more a significant example: there a deeply-rooted, superstitious fear of horses has prevented the horse from becoming the symbol of prestige which it is in other hills; possession of a horse would be regarded merely as unusual and queer. The ultimate question, why assimilation has been so effective, will be discussed in a later chapter.

clothing, *angreb*, rifles; others are well on the way to becoming such necessities, like the food fashions of the sophisticated Dilling people, who can no longer do without tea, sugar, and coffee.

To these new fashions and adopted alien demands we must add a final demand of a different order, though equally 'new' and 'alien'—the expenditure involved in tax and fines. Can the indigenous economic system adjust itself to both old and new needs? And, as the new needs can only be met through increased exchange, can the economic system be developed so as to cope with both subsistence- and exchange-needs? I think not—at least, not without undergoing very radical changes. Let me admit that in one community, at least, which has adopted many new needs, Heiban, the increasing demand appears correlated with an increased and more efficient agricultural production. But in the majority of cases the evidence supports the doubts which I have voiced. The steadily growing number of labourers from the Nuba Mountains proves that the new demands have necessitated a completely new means of livelihood, which is bound to dislocate the customary organization of production and partly even social organization at large. The food situation in the Nuba Mountains is another instance; it seems an unfortunate coincidence that old food resources (game) have disappeared just when the new demands on the productive capacity of the people were taking root.

The people themselves are becoming increasingly aware of these difficulties. They view with alarm the tightening grip of money economy. They realize, too, that it derives from those almost uncontrollable forces—changing values and desires. The position is, of course, far from unique; these words of a Nuba farmer might have been spoken anywhere in changing Africa: 'Everything the Government has done for us is excellent, except what it did to our sons, who are now spoiled and no longer think of farm work, but only of money.'

The sons of to-day will be the family heads of to-morrow. But even the father-generation has been caught in the rising tide—which, since it cannot be dammed, must at least be canalized. Unable to stop the expansion of 'primary necessities', the people are searching for means of reducing expenditure elsewhere. They have seized on our second category of demands—the 'obligatory customary expenses'—as the most promising solution. No other explanation is possible if we hear that in several tribes the people appealed to the Administration to sanction and implement a reduction of the traditional bride-price.

The category of expenditure for the sake of display and prestige appears least affected by modern changes. The mental attitude which reveals itself in the love of display and spectacular achievements has lost nothing of its driving force, although the material in which it can express itself has partly changed. In the sections of the Tira tribe which have come under Arab influence, certain traditional ceremonies have been replaced by similarly spectacular celebrations of (male and female)

circumcision; in Dilling tea- and coffee-parties are competing with the customary fashion of feasting or offering hospitality. But though the incentives which, in traditional Nuba society, result in the levelling of economic inequality are still alive, a subtle change in their effectiveness is discernible. It is correlated with the change in the concept of wealth itself.

The traditional method of displaying wealth and acquiring prestige through ceremonies and feasts was bound up essentially with the communal life of the group. To-day, prestige can be won and wealth displayed as much by expenditure which benefits only the one lucky individual. Chiefs and other prosperous men live up to the high standard of their status by investing in an impressive dress, in the purchase of a horse or sword, deck-chair, or enamel teapot. Unlike prestige, moreover, gowns and horses, swords and teapots can be inherited. Public opinion still demands generous hospitality and lavish celebrations of the leading individuals in the community; whether or not these public duties, essential features of a 'democratic' society bent on an equal distribution of wealth and privilege, will ultimately be overshadowed by the new 'individualistic' desires only the future can show.

CHAPTER IV

HEIBAN AND OTORO

People and Country

THE two tribes occupy the centre of the broad range of hills sweeping south and south-west from Delami towards Talodi. The Heiban people live on the southern flank of a large rugged massif, the western and northern sides of which are inhabited by two other tribes, the peoples of Abol and Laro (known on official maps as Alleira). The settlements of the three tribes lie close together, often only separated by a narrow gully or a projecting spur of the mountain. The three groups are also closely related culturally and speak an almost identical language. Everything that will be said in the following about the Heiban tribe also applies (unless stated otherwise) to its neighbours, Abol and Laro.

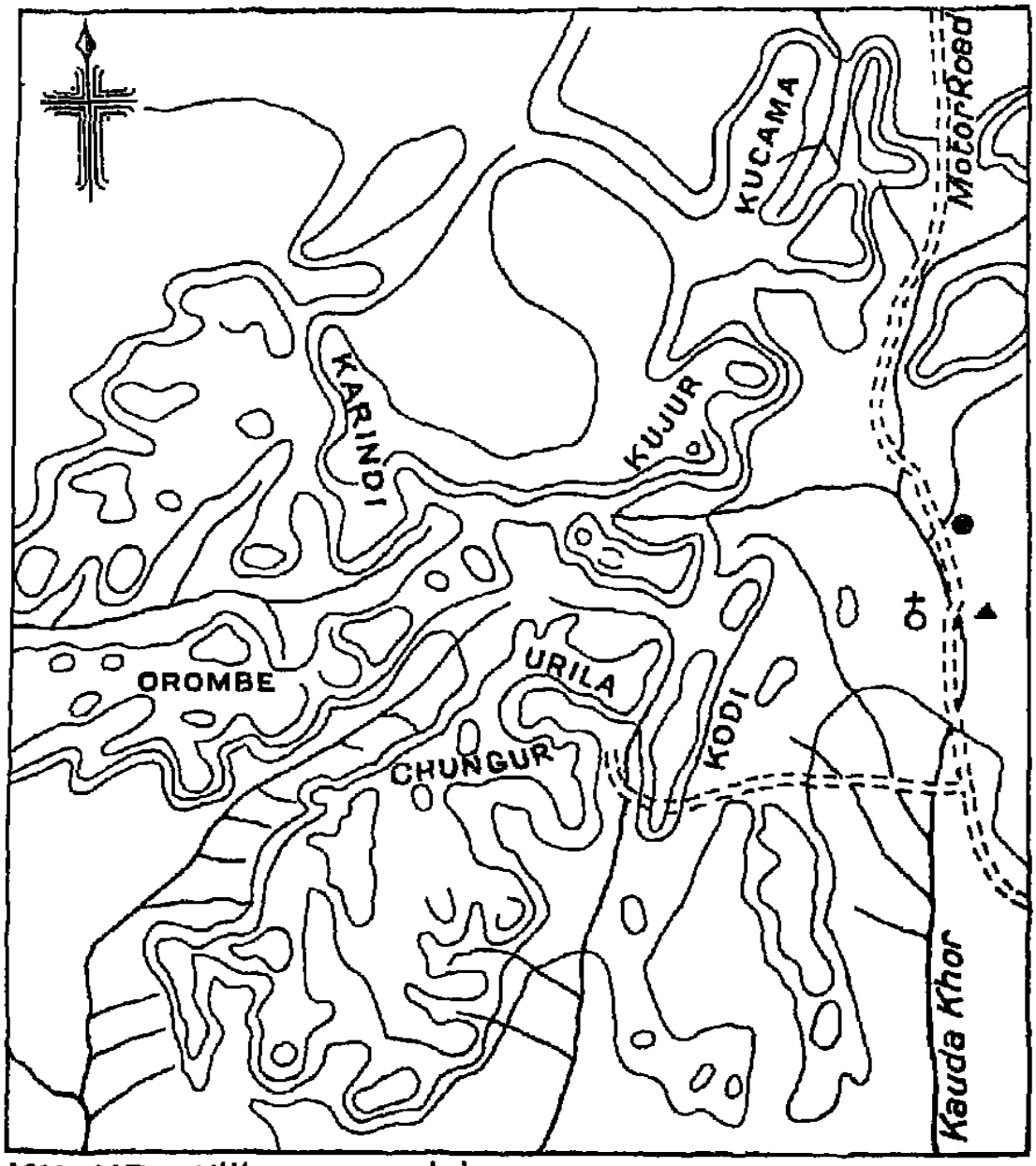
The last tribe is the largest of the three (perhaps 7,000 strong). It occupies over two-thirds of the massif, and, within it, nine separate hills,[1] its numerous settlements being scattered over the high plateau as well as hillsides and valleys. Originally, it appears, the people of Laro were living both on the plateau and on the lower hills branching out from the main massif until, under the threat of the Dervish raids, the whole population moved up into the safety of the highest hills. Quite recently the people have begun to move down again, although some, the older people especially, still prefer the lofty hill settlements to the villages down in the valleys. Small sections even left the hills altogether and have settled in the plain among the people of Heiban. There is not much more that we can learn about their history. Although well aware of the close linguistic and cultural ties with Heiban and Abol, the Laro people deny that the three groups are of common origin. Till the advent of the present Government, Laro and Abol maintained no contacts except those of mutual raids and fights 'at sight'. The same state of permanent hostility between Laro and Heiban seems to have given way later to a pact of friendship engineered by the 'Big Chief' of Laro, which even led to intermarriage between the two tribes. A similar change from hostility to friendship took place between Laro and one of its northern neighbours, the Koalib of Dere (while the state of war continued with the other sections of the Koalib tribe, in Kudring, Ombre, and Delami). This tribal pact was not, however, followed by intermarriage.

The peoples of Abol and Heiban (who call themselves Eban, after the main mountain in this range) live to-day at the foot of the mountain, on low hillocks in front of the massif, and in settlements pushed fairly far into the plain. I estimate their population as 2,000–3,000. They, too,

[1] These hills are: Gobeny, Longom, Kindemal, Undir, Dundili, Lormeny, Odi, Rawli, and Nayn. The last-named hill belongs to-day politically to Abol.

have lived for a time on the top of the plateau when, during the Mahdiya, they fled there from their original settlements on the lower ranges of the mountain flank, though some settlements, well protected in crags and behind huge boulders, were never moved. Others, when returning to the valley from the mountain refuge, split into several local communities

OTORO HILLS



KUJUR....Hill communities
●.....Dispensary ▲....Government School
♁.....Mission

or established offshoots in the plain. The settlements in the plain and on the low hillocks are all quite recent, only three to seven years old, and were invariably the result of agricultural expansion. There have been many other movements from hill to hill and settlement to settlement, so that it is often difficult to keep track of the tribal distribution, especially

as sections of the Koalib and Laro, too, have in recent times built their hamlets among the Heiban settlements.

To the south of Heiban, across a narrow valley, lies Otoro country.[1] The Otoro, the largest tribe in the Eastern Jebels (numbering about 40,000), inhabit a far-flung hill range composed of eight main hill chains. They are, from north to south, Kucama or Kujama, Karindi, the twin-hills of Kujur (Kujur-Loro and Kujur-Nworre—the 'Kauda' of official maps), Urila, Orombe, Medka, and the large plateau of Congwo (the official Chungur). The Otoro speak a language which is closely related to that of Heiban, and the two tribes understand each other without difficulty. Certain crucial terms in Otoro language, however, specially terms referring to features of the social organization, differ from the corresponding Heiban terms and are related, rather surprisingly, to the terminology of the Tira tribe. The same twofold link with Heiban and Tira also characterizes Otoro culture in general. Otoro culture is itself not wholly uniform, but shows certain minor variations on the different hills.

The Otoro live and have always lived on the plateau and in the high-lying valleys of their mountain range. Only one small section from Medka moved its settlements, two or three years ago, into the valley to a place known as Kodi. As a tribe, the Otoro have lived in their present home as far back as memory goes. But population movements within the hill range have repeatedly taken place, if tradition is to be believed, from the earliest times. Congwo (or, as we propose to call it, Chungur), the seat of the Paramount Chief, was founded in times of which nothing but a vague memory remains by people from Orombe. Karindi hill was uninhabited until four generations ago, when people from Urila and later Orombe settled there. Other hills have seen both depopulation and re-settlement in historical times. Kujama, the lowest and most exposed of the Otoro hills, was abandoned by its once numerous inhabitants during the Mahdiya, when they sought refuge in Kujur and Karindi. Afterwards a small section only returned to the old site, while the majority of the people stayed in their new homes.

The most interesting feature in this immigration and re-emigration is the change of social identity which it entailed. Originally an exiled local group, the immigrants came to be regarded as a new clan and were as such incorporated into the clan system of the groups among which they had settled. Irrespective of the fact that, in their old habitat, the immigrant group was itself divided in several clans, it now became known by the single clan name, Ligyama—that is, People from Kujama.

Early immigrants or refugees from other tribes were adopted in similar fashion into the Otoro communities. Thus people from Shuway (Omgyan in Otoro language) and Laro are now known as the Lomgyan and Kolaro clans of Otoro. One large Otoro section of alien origin, however,

[1] Otoro is the name of the mountain range; the people call themselves Lotoro, the prefix l- indicating the inhabitants of the locality.

maintained its own social identity and its original clan names. It comprises people from Tira belonging to eight different clans (all also represented in Tira proper) who settled in the south of Chungur hill four generations ago. Unlike the other immigrant groups, they are bilingual and have kept, with their language, also certain features of their original culture. Yet they have been fully absorbed into the community in which they now live. In the feuds between the Chungur Otoro and their Tira neighbours the Tira immigrants took the side of their hosts. The tribal fusion is illustrated most strikingly in the adoption, by the Chungur Otoro, of a food *tabu* that exists between one of the Tira clans represented in Otoro, Lver, and another clan in Tira proper, Iltobo. These two clans, possessing the same strong grain magic, must not eat of each other's food lest lunacy befall them. The Chungur Otoro, having eaten of the food of the Lver clan in their hill, also made its food avoidance their own. As they put it: 'To mix in your stomach food from the Lver and the Iltobo causes lunacy.'

This historical coalescence of diverse groups into the new, wider unit of the Otoro tribe may well have succeeded another, earlier coalescence of this nature which is no longer remembered, but which left its traces in the small cultural differences within the tribe to which I have referred before. Here we discover a first instance of that fluid and heterogeneous nature of the tribe which we have discussed in an earlier chapter. It is a particularly illuminating instance, for it still reveals the stages of the gradual evolution, through expansion and coalescence, of the present tribal unit.

Settlement and Homestead

The method of settlement which we described in the chapter on land tenure is also that of Otoro and Heiban. Such differences as exist between the forms of settlement in the two tribes are due to environmental conditions. The Heiban settlements, which are largely strung out along the foot of a high and steep mountain, show a closer concentration of homesteads, approaching to proper villages, while the Otoro homesteads are scattered loosely and irregularly over hill-tops and valleys. In the terminology which we adopted, the small Heiban tribe represents a single hill community (*len*, 'hill'), divided into a number of villages (using the term in a very loose sense), which are referred to as *denu*—'houses' or 'homesteads'. The eight hills of Otoro form as many separate hill communities (*ken*, or *amrgen*),[1] each with numerous homesteads and hamlets. Each hamlet or 'village' bears a special name. The hill communities are called either by the name of the hill range, e.g. Kujur, Orombe, Kujama, Kwara (their inhabitants being known as Lukujur, Lorombe, Ligyama, Lokwara), or by the name of the main settlement on the hill: thus Kwara

[1] The vernacular terms *len* or *amrgen* are not unequivocal: they are used both for the single hill community and the whole mountain massif inhabited by the tribe.

hill is to-day mostly referred to as Urila, and another hill, Kalyia, as Chungur. Neither hill communities nor the small settlements possess a conspicuous centre of community life, like a market-place, or an imposing chief's house. The cleared dancing grounds in or near the Otoro settlements or, in Heiban and Otoro, the cairn-shaped shrines at which the people perform the big seasonal sacrifices are the only comparable landmarks, but are neither conspicuous nor yet centres in the physical sense of the word. Dancing grounds and shrines belong to a number of neighbouring hamlets in common. Drawn closer together by the fact of their geographical position, these clusters of settlements form a local unit within the local unit—a smaller local community within the hill community proper. As we shall see, it is more real in Otoro than in Heiban.

In Otoro this group of hamlets is also often referred to by a common name, taken from the main settlement or from the locality, the hillock or small plateau on which the hamlets are situated.[1] But this small community is never strictly defined: repeated movements, the natural growth of one or the decline of another settlement, keep its boundaries fluid.

The single hamlet or 'village' consists of a greatly varying number of homesteads, which are of the same type in both tribes. A homestead consists of two to three round mud huts arranged in a row or at an angle and leading into each other. As a rule, a flat-topped mud-and-wattle structure, round or square, adjoins the huts, serving as an entrance-hut, store-room, and sleeping-hut for the boys. Its flat roof is stacked with firewood. One of the two mud huts contains the indoor granaries and storage pots, the other, kitchen and bedroom in one, grinding stones, cooking place, and beds. There may also be a hut for sheep and goats, a low pigsty and, a short distance away, the strong, flat-topped mud hut serving as a pen for the bulls which are being fattened up for one or the other ceremony.[2] Outside granaries, one or two high timber racks for drying the grain (in Otoro), and a thorn fence (in Heiban) complete the inventory.

Man, wife, and unmarried children form the complement of the Otoro and Heiban house. Man and wife sleep together in the 'kitchen'; with them the small children. Bigger girls, if they are staying at home, sleep round or on top of the big indoor granaries; boys in the 'entrance-hut'. If a man has several wives he will build a separate house for each additional wife, or, more rarely, add another hut to the original house. The houses of co-wives are as a rule (though not always) situated close together. The man will divide his time between the different families: he will

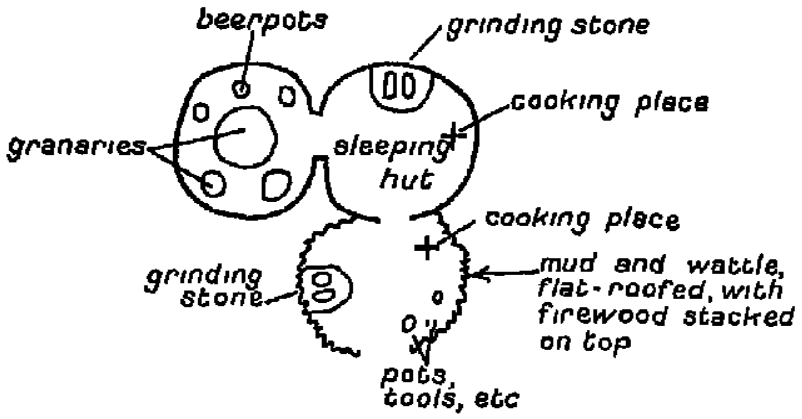
[1] On the north side of Chungur hill, for example, we find Chungur itself, with five or six small hamlets, and another cluster of four hamlets grouped round the 'leading' village of Cawret; on Urila hill, Urila proper, Kodedre and Coka, each composed of a number of hamlets.

[2] The people of Heiban also use boarded-up crags and small caves for this purpose; or they put their bulls on a small rock-encased meadow on top of Jebel Heiban, where the animals can feed on the fat grass, but have little space to move and cannot escape.

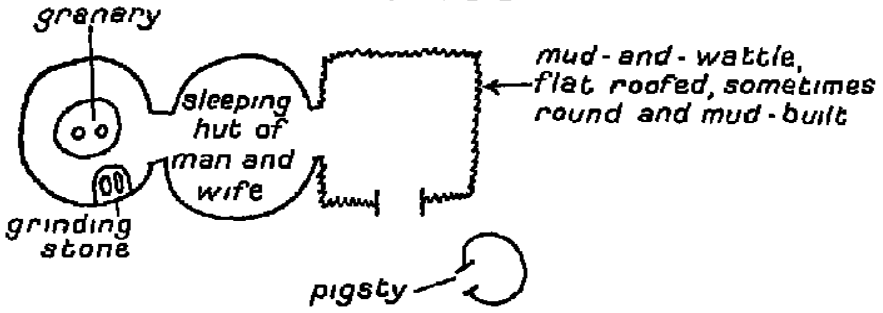
eat every day in another wife's house and will also, that day, spend the night with her. But the rules are not strict, and sexual intercourse with different wives does not always follow a strict roster.

Daughters go to live with their husbands when they marry. Married sons may build themselves a new house near their father's house; but as often they may move to a new place, some distance from the paternal

HEIBAN HOUSE



OTORO HOUSE



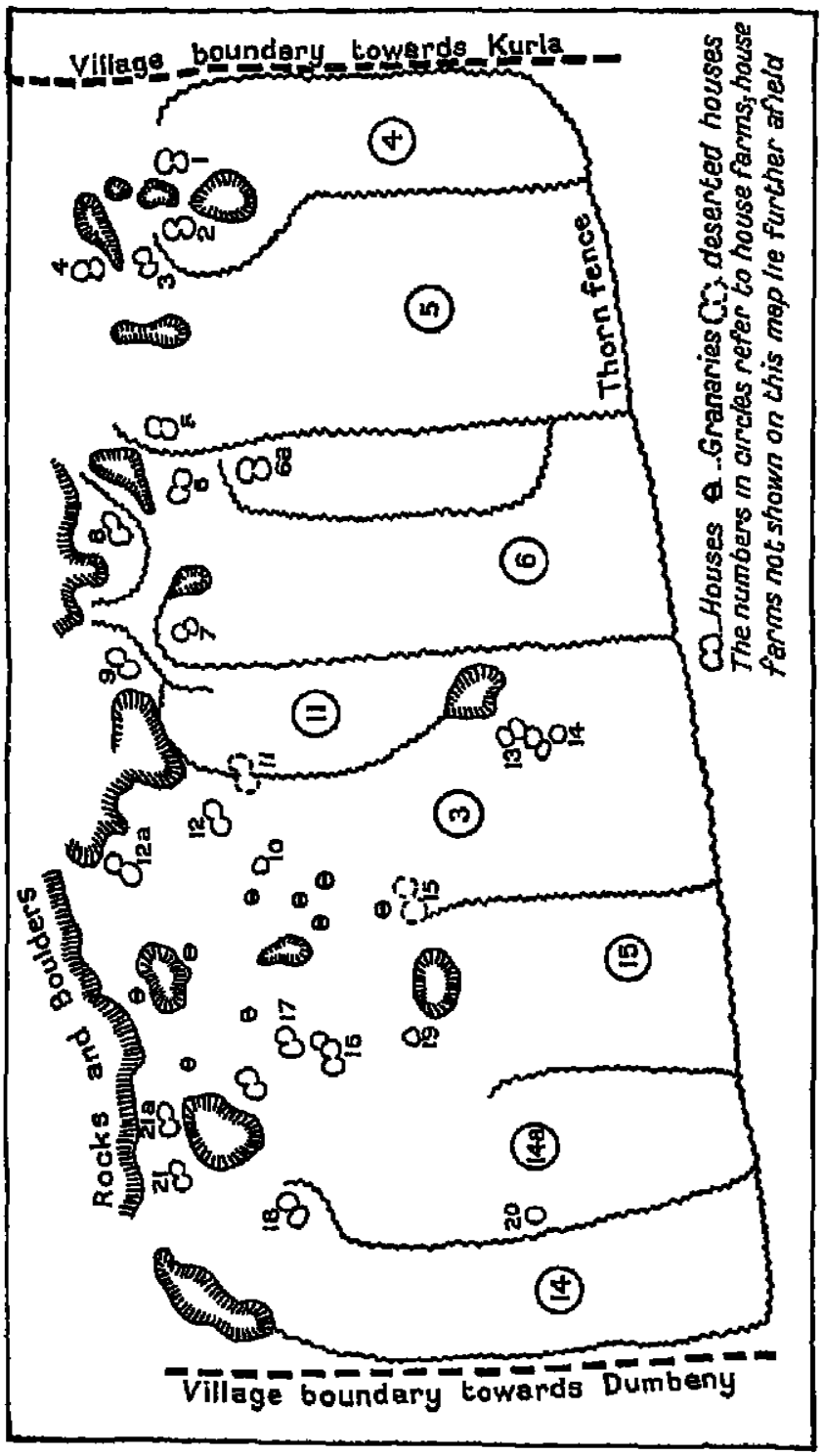
home, even into another village or hill community. But they would move far away only if there is a good reason for it—above all, if they have quarrelled with their family. The link between brothers is frequently so strong that, if an elder son moved to a new locality, his younger brothers would join him later.

This shows already that the local community is not organized on a kinship basis. Neither families nor the wider social unit based on kinship, the clan, coincide with local groups. As tradition has it, different clans had their home in different localities and have only later spread to other parts of the tribal area. Even to-day many clans appear concentrated in different local communities, occurring in large numbers in one, and being absent or weakly represented in others. We may assume that in the distant past of the tribe local groups and clans did indeed coincide, though as far back as concrete genealogies can take us this coincidence appears already broken (see sketch maps on pp. 90–91).

The small individual family living in one house (or in the several connected houses of co-wives) forms the nucleus of the social organization

of the tribe. It is aptly described as the 'house of so-and-so' or, more elaborately, as the 'people in the house'. It represents, as we have seen, the pivotal unit of the economic system. We shall see presently that the relations embodied in the small biological family between husbands and

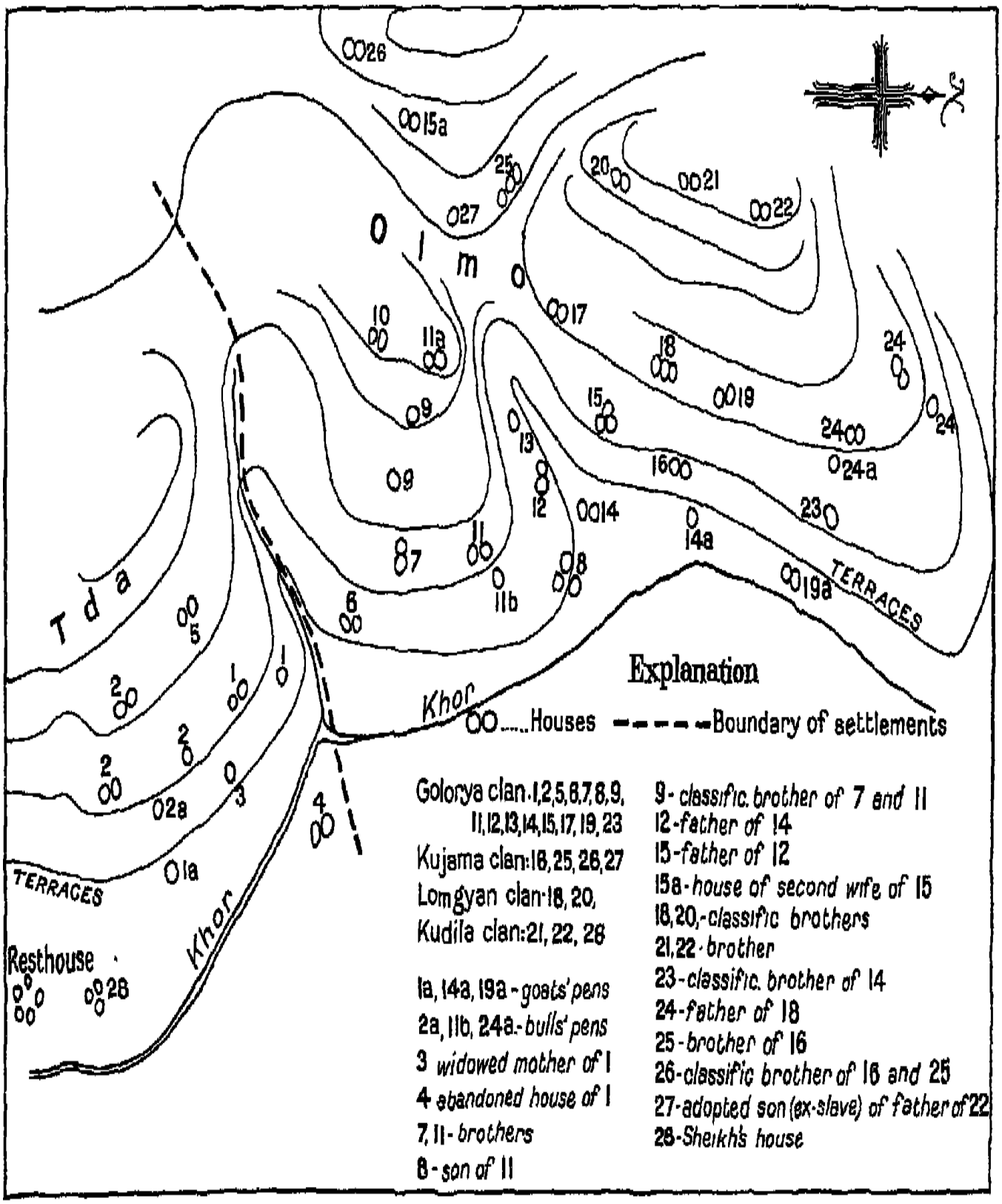
THE VILLAGE LONGOR IN HEIBAN



wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, enter as decisive factors into practically every social activity.

In the nucleus of the individual family two planes meet which, together, circumscribe kinship structure. One appears as an extension of the biological family, with all its various relationships—paternal and maternal,

OTORO SETTLEMENT IN KODI



affinities of descent as of marriage; all these we subsume in the term 'kindred'. The second is anchored in one element of kinship only—descent in one line of ancestry—and constitutes the realm of the clan. Let me start with the latter.

Clan

The Heiban and Otoro clan is patrilineal. It is called *kware* in Heiban (lit. tree, i.e. as much as 'pedigree') and *erido* in Otoro.[1] I recorded thirty different clans in Heiban and thirty-five in Otoro. Of the thirty-five Otoro clans, seven to nine occur, in varying combination, in each of the hill communities. The clans vary considerably in size: a large clan numbers 100–120 families (i.e. 600–800 individuals), a small clan not more than twenty to thirty families (or 120–180 individuals). The Heiban clans are considerably smaller than the Otoro clans. Five hill communities of Otoro may illustrate the local distribution of clans in that tribe. The different clan names have, incidentally, no traceable meaning except in the few instances in which an original tribal or local section reappears in the guise of a clan.

List of Otoro Clans

The numbers against the clans in two hill communities show the approximate number of individual families. Clan names in italics indicate clans of Tira origin.

Urila	Medka	Kujur	Chungur-North	Chungur-South
Lomgyan	Lomgyan (50)	Lomgyan	Lomgyan	—
Golorya	Golorya (25)	Golorya	Golorya	—
Lugudu	Lugudu (7)	Lugudu	—	—
Laminyar	—	—	—	—
Ligyama	Ligyama (12)	Ligyama	Ligyama	—
Lodhoro	—	—	Lodhoro	—
Gudila	Gudila (80)	—	Gudila	—
Lemore	—	—	—	—
Tangaleny	—	—	—	—
—	Logormede (20)	—	—	Logormede (15)
—	—	Kolaro	—	—
—	—	Kwere	Kwere	—
—	—	Tunga	—	—
—	—	Ldongen	—	—
—	—	Ngapena	—	—
—	Kwabol (1)	—	Kwabol	—
—	—	—	*Lver*	*Lver* (15)
—	—	—	Lokogyama	Lokogyama (10)
—	—	—	—	*Itumbel* (10)
—	—	—	—	*Iltaro* (30)
—	—	—	—	*Ldonyo* (15)
—	—	—	—	*Ltumdu* (15)
—	—	—	—	*Lghor* (20)
—	—	—	—	Lera (15)

In Heiban and in most of the Otoro communities the people have no knowledge of clan ancestors beyond the vague assumption that the group

[1] Cp. the Tira term *iyrdo* (p. 182).

which forms a clan to-day descended, in the dim past, from 'one grandfather', whom, however, one can neither name nor link with existing genealogies. The latter, in fact, rarely go further back than three or four generations.

Chungur in Otoro is an exception. Here the people mention certain semi-mythical ancestors called Ragyu, Tula, Cobe, and Kepina, who are, rather vaguely, referred to as the founders of the Lokogyama, Gudila, and Kwere clans. The tradition does not make it clear whether these four men were founders of the clans as such or only of their Chungur sections, for all four are said to have come to Chungur from Orombe. Ragyu, incidentally, the ancestor of Lokogyama, the 'royal' clan of Otoro, disappears somehow from history and is succeeded by a second 'founder' of the clan, Tula. Between these clan ancestors and the concrete genealogies that have been preserved there is a wide gap which is bridged only in the case of Tula, who is linked—rather unconvincingly—with the genealogy of the Otoro ruling house.[1] It is probably no accident that this exceptional interest in the origin and past of clans should occur only in Chungur, the traditional residence of the hereditary tribal chief. The greater 'historical sense' reflects the familiar dynastic ideology—that evaluation of the past which tends to go hand in hand with the growth of hereditary power and prestige.

With this one exception, the clans are, socially, of equal order. There are no 'superior' or 'inferior' clans, nor clans that stand apart from the rest. Neither the possession of unusual magic faculties (to be mentioned presently) nor the memory of descent subserve such a distinction.

We have already stated that the clan does not—or does no longer—constitute a local community. Yet the factor of locality does enter, indirectly, into the clan organization. For in the various social activities in which the clan organization realizes itself it is not always membership of the clan as such that counts, but often membership of a more restricted unit composed of clan members who come into frequent and regular contact. We have thus a widest, theoretical unit of the clan, sharply defined by descent, and within it smaller, effective, sections defined by the more fluid criteria of familiarity and communal life—that is, ultimately, locality. This clan section has no name of its own: it is referred to simply as 'clan' and by the general clan name, only the context revealing which of the two units is meant.

The social effectiveness of the clan (as of all social groups) reveals itself in the rules of conduct which it entails, and in the rights and obligations which devolve on its members in virtue of their membership. Again, as in all social groups, these rights and obligations are of two kinds. Some point, as it were, beyond themselves to social purposes and institutions which exist in their own right (e.g. marriage, a legal

[1] Tula was, according to tradition, the father-in-law of Aldora, who was the ancestor (great-grandfather, to be exact) of the present chief. This interpretation leaves unexplained how, in this patrilineal society, Tula could have become the founder of a clan through his daughter.

system, &c.), influencing decisively their working and meaning. Others do not realize themselves in special institutions, but represent, rather, pervasive expressions of the group structure. They have no ulterior motive beyond affirming and manifesting this group structure and the human relations, internal or external, which characterize it (e.g. respect, fellowship, submissiveness, &c.). They constitute a code of etiquette and serve as group symbols, much as uniforms or badges, special gestures of salute or forms of address, are designed to render visible the unity and structure of well-defined (e.g. military) bodies.

The first group of rights and obligations will be discussed in detail under the headings of the various institutions which they subserve. Let me anticipate the main facts: In Heiban the rule of exogamy rigidly proscribes marriage—as also mere sexual intercourse—within the (theoretical) clan. In Otoro, with its much larger and more widely scattered clans, clan exogamy is a thing of the past. Its rules were observed rigidly (people say) only when clans were small, and before they spread so widely that different sections of the same clan, possibly living in different hills, grew as remote from one another as different clans. The Otoro genealogies show that already two and three generations ago exogamy was only observed within the same hill community—that is, within the narrow clan section based on contact and familiarity—though to-day even this restricted application of clan exogamy has lapsed. In fact, informants will often quote only the locality from which their grandmothers, mothers, or even brothers' wives have come, being unable to recall their clan, which has become irrelevant. The old men in Otoro also maintain that in the past the negative definition of exogamy was supplemented by positive rules of intermarriage between specific clans; but information on this point is vague and contradictory.

The Heiban people would not admit that a breach of exogamy in the strict sense of the word, with regard to marriage, ever happens. They do not deny the occasional temptation to disregard the rules; but marriage is too public an affair—the families and older relations whose consent and co-operation are indispensable in marriage would never countenance such a union. There is, then, no sense in speaking of sanctions with regard to something that simply 'isn't done'. But illicit sexual intercourse within the clan is a possible offence, and here the sanction is clearly formulated: it is punished, by God, with leprosy, which would not invariably visit the culprits themselves, but might appear among any of their relations. The Otoro people conceive of a gradual lapsing of exogamy; for them, there has been a first deviation of the rule, a first deed of what 'isn't done'. The supernatural sanction is not (or no longer) associated with clan exogamy, but only with incest, i.e. sexual intercourse in forbidden kinship degrees. Formerly, the old men would say, marriage in the clan, too, was a grave crime—but there their memory stops. This concept of clan morality is in some measure extended to the women who marry into the clan. Adultery or even flirting with wives or brides of

clansmen, though less serious, is yet an offence against the clan code. There would be no one to side with the paramour when he would have to face the inevitable duel with his rival.

In the legal sphere the clan imposes upon its members the collective duty of blood feud in the case of homicide between clans. Homicide within the clan excludes revenge and indeed all human retribution; the sanction is, once more, leprosy.[1]

In the economic sphere, on the other hand, the clan exercises no influence. Nor is its influence very pronounced in religious practice. The priestship of the main cults is vested in families, and not in the clan; the main seasonal rites are based on locality; and certain other magic faculties appear unaccountably in individuals, irrespective of their clan membership. In Otoro we discover, rather surprisingly, two clans which are, *qua* clans, invested with a certain healing magic. Thus every member of the Lokogyama clan (the chief's clan) possesses—potentially—the gift of *nadyama*, of curing intestinal pains by laying his (or her) hands on the ailing body; and every member of the Lomgyan clan can similarly cure a certain wasting disease known as *nrany*. Different individuals may possess this gift in different degree. But the main fact is that the acquisition of the magic faculty depends on clan membership. One Heiban clan, Lgoko, possesses a clan magic of a different order: whoever steals anything belonging to a member of this clan will die. I cannot explain this unique characteristic of three out of 70 clans, unless it represents one of the cultural variations due to the incorporation of originally alien sections into the tribe and clan system.[2]

We turn now to the second group of clan rights and obligations, which serve as expressions of clan unity and structure. The primary right of this order is the right to bear the name of the clan. Every adult when asked for his (or her) clan will readily produce this name; only young boys and girls, whose life is dominated by the family, locality, or age-grade organization rather than the clan might not always be certain about their clan. The clans possess no external symbols of membership like badges or different styles of dress or ornaments. Their group symbols are embodied in the characteristically varying behaviour of clans in certain crucial social situations.

A first conspicuous clan symbol of this order takes the form of a 'ritual direction'. In the burials of Heiban and Otoro the direction in which the head of the body is placed varies in accordance with the clan to which

[1] Leprosy, which is so closely linked with clan offences, is—quite logically—regarded as dangerous and infectious only within the clan. I once attended a clan feast in Heiban at which the people were drinking beer happily in the company of a leprous woman who, it appeared, had taken a holiday from the local leper colony. My informants explained that they were not afraid of drinking with her (as they usually are of eating or drinking with lepers), since she belonged to a different clan.

[2] The Lomgyan clan comes, in fact, from Shuway hill. Such clan-bound magic faculties are also characteristic of the social system of Tira and Moro. But there is no evidence to link the Lgoko or Lokogyama clan with either tribe.

the dead belonged. The same orientation is also observed in many rituals of the living; it determines which way one faces during a sacrifice, in which direction one thrusts a sacred spear or lifts an offering to God or the spirits. The 'ritual direction' is not an absolute one; it is orientated, not on the points of the compass, but on a concrete landmark—the flank or peak of a mountain. If you visit different local sections of a clan which is widely scattered, you will find that the ritual direction varies, in an absolute sense, from locality to locality, but will always point towards the same hill or part of the hill. According to tradition, this landmark hill is the original home of the clan, and its memory is preserved in the ritual direction. How far this is based on fact is impossible to say; to-day, at any rate, the significance of the ritual direction is merely that of a clan symbol.

Then there is a certain ritual following upon birth and centring in the ceremonial first shaving of the heads of the new-born and its mother: both the form of the ritual and, even more so, the date on which it is performed after the birth differ in different clans. A final, twin symbolism of clan membership is embodied in the ritual rules of the first-fruit and harvest rites, called *ketage* in Heiban and *kurregyo* in Otoro. In the course of these rites, the owner of the field places two sheaves of the first crop, grain or simsim, crosswise on the ground before him; he pours some beer over it and burns a little animal fat, like incense, on a piece of bark, with which he draws, three times, a circle in the air over the crops while speaking a blessing formula. This rite concluded, the rest of the crop may be cut and the first-fruits eaten. Now the number of ears of grain or heads of simsim which make up the sacrificial sheaves is laid down for every clan, being twice four in some clans, twice five in others, or another figure in yet other clans. Similarly, the fat that is burned is goat's fat in certain clans, and sheep's or bull's fat in others. In every house you will find a goat horn filled with this ritual fat hanging above the door—another conspicuous emblem of clan membership.

All these rules, serving to define the identity of the clan, apply, significantly, to the large, 'theoretical' unit. They are not, as a rule, very well known outside the particular clan to which they apply. But everyone knows that different clans follow different rules. The symbolic significance of the clan observances is thus unimpaired by their limited publicity. Nor is this significance contradicted by the close connexion of these observances with religious and magical concepts. This connexion invests them with an added impressiveness; it does no more. The magic and religious concepts are essentially common to all clans (excepting only some of the clan-bound birth rites in Otoro); the ritual variations from clan to clan do not alter this meaning or introduce some specific new sense not shared by other clans. Rather they represent formal details of behaviour and introduce formal differences into otherwise identical contexts. This purely 'formal' and, we might say, diacritical nature of these clan observances is borne out by the fact that the single rule and

observance bears no specific and unique relation to a particular clan, but acquires such significance only in combination with the other rules. The ritual directions which occur in the tribe are much less numerous than its clans; four kinds of 'ritual fats' must accommodate thirty-five clans; the same is true of the selection of the 'ritual numbers' observed in the first-fruit rites. What counts, then, is the varying combination of these various rules. They appear in permutations suggestive almost of deliberate calculation, each permutation defining the identity of an individual clan. The following table may illustrate this situation in certain Heiban and Otoro clans. The variations in the birth ritual are too complicated to be fitted into the diagram, which shall only give the varying date of the ceremonial hair-shaving.

Heiban

Clan	*Ritual direction*	*Ritual number*	*Ritual fat*	*Hair-shaving after birth*
Yangal . . .	W.	15	Ram	8 days
Kurimete . .	W.	9	Ram	16 days
Gudiya . . .	S.	5	Goat	3 days
Gamral . . .	W.	7	Goat	3 days
Kudela . . .	W.	5	Sheep	3 days
Limunu . . .	N.	3	Sheep	No rule
Lrere . . .	S.	7	Sheep	No rule

Otoro

Clan	*Ritual direction*	*Ritual number*	*Ritual fat*	*Hair-shaving after birth*
Lokogyama . .	E.	5	He-goat	3 months
Gudila . . .	E.	3	Cow or bull	1 month
Kwabol . . .	N.	5	He-goat	1 month
Lomgyan. . .	N.	3	He- or she-goat	No rule
Kodhoro . . .	N.	3	Ram	3 months
Golorya . . .	E.	4	He-goat	No rule.

In two Otoro clans the clan observances which we have enumerated are supplemented by special food *tabus* valid for the members of the clan. They are the same two clans in which we also recorded the exceptional occurrence of a clan magic—Lomgyan and Lokogyama. The Lomgyan people may neither eat nor kill jackals, lest they fall ill and die; the Lokogyama are forbidden to eat lizards, the penalty taking the form of a wasting disease for which there is no cure. There is no rule against killing lizards or, for example, using their skins for making sheaths for the arm-knives which the Nuba carry; but a Lokogyama man must not

touch the dead animal, and must wait for the member of some other clan to skin it for him. The Tira clans in Otoro observe similar food *tabus*—as do all clans of this tribe, in Tira proper. Again, I cannot explain the isolated occurrence of this *tabu* in two Otoro clans. There is evidence to show that the people themselves regard it as exceptional and puzzling. For they have rationalized it, and produced a 'historical' explanation of a kind attempted in none of the Nuba tribes in which such food *tabus* are a common and typical feature. The Lokogyama tell you the following story: One day Aldora (the great-grandfather of the present Otoro chief) went hunting. Throwing his club after game, he happened to hit a lizard. The lizard bit him, and a few days later he was dead. Since then, they conclude, no man of his clan would eat the flesh of a lizard. The Lomgyan have a similar story, but they project it into the distant past of mythical and anonymous happenings.[1]

To these 'formal' clan observances we must add another, different, category of clan rights and obligations, which express the unity and identity of the clan, not through the sameness of action, but through concerted action and co-operation. They define the identity of the clan negatively, by forbidding members of different clans to eat meat or drink milk together (other food being regarded as harmless), threatening them with the penalty of leprosy.[2] They assert its identity positively, through a special institution, the 'clan meal' (under which name this usage is known). No Heiban or Otoro man may eat meat by himself or in the small family circle; whenever he slaughters an animal, he must invite a few clansmen to share his meal (game falls in a different category).[3] Once or twice a year, moreover, he will kill a sheep or goat specially for the purpose of arranging a 'clan meal'. Although God and the ancestors are invoked (rather perfunctorily) at the slaughtering and bits of meat are put aside as an offering, this meal has no real religious significance. Its primary and professed purpose is to bring clan fellows regularly together—in other words, to foster the internal integration of the group. We can see that the clan meal stands halfway between the formal, symbolic clan rules of conduct and the clan rights and obligations which appear as determining factors in other institutions. Like the latter, it is charged with more than symbolic significance and crystallizes in a specific institution; but, like the former, it serves no purpose other than that of rendering visible and integrating the clan itself. The knowledge of the different rules of behaviour valid in different clans equally contributes towards

[1] Certain other food avoidances in Otoro and Heiban apply to the whole tribe, and are, in fact, common to nearly all Nuba groups. We shall return to this point in the chapter on the Tira and Moro tribes.

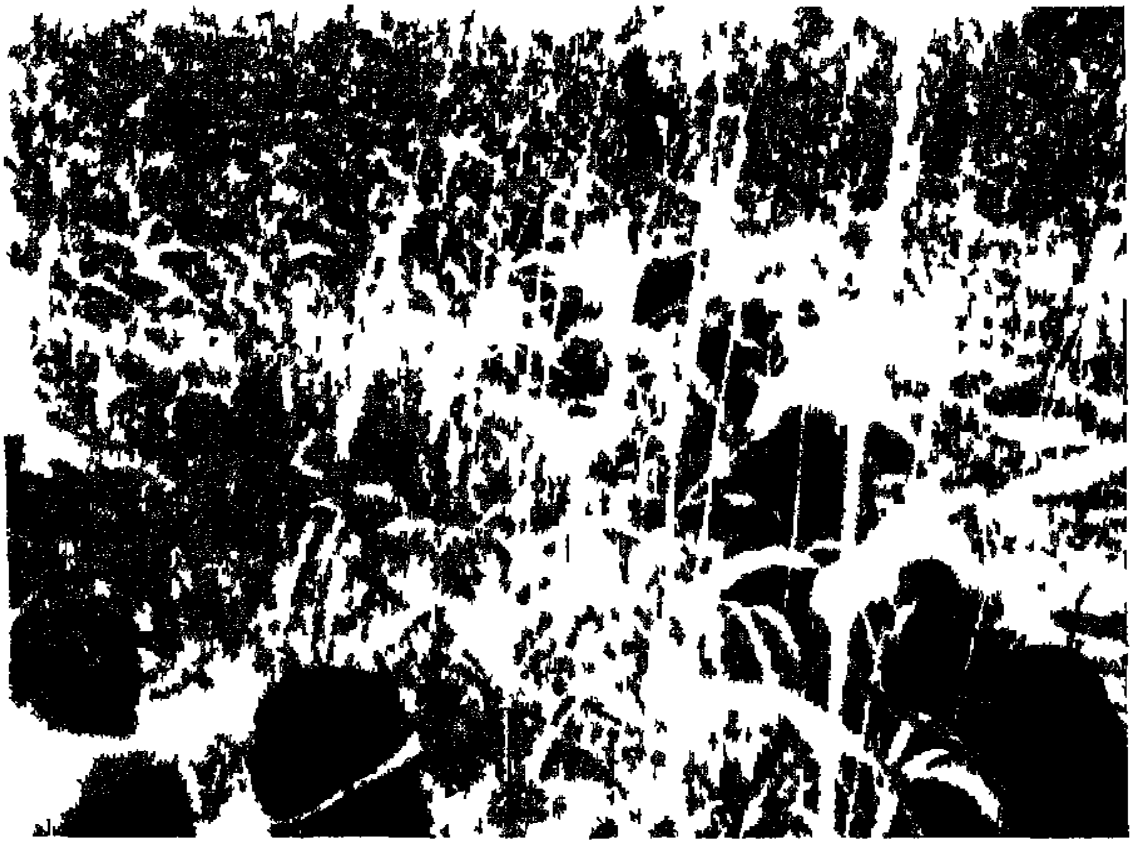
[2] This prohibition is in abeyance on travels, hunting expeditions and in the cattle camps, provided the food does not come from the households of the individuals sharing it. All Nuba tribes which observe these eating avoidances also recognize this exemption.

[3] Beer, too, one should never drink by oneself: but in the case of beer one would invite friends and neighbours, and not only, or necessarily, clan relations.

PLANTING IN HILIBAN

HOEING IN HILIBAN

TERRACED CULTIVATIONS IN OTORO (CHUNGUR)



WEEDING IN OTORO

clan integration; but the integration which it achieves remains on an abstract, conceptual plane. The clan meal lends it a concrete nucleus. It is, in fact, the only purely integrative institution which the clan system of these tribes evolved.[1] Unlike the conceptual integration, which embraces the theoretical unit of the clan, this concrete integration is concerned, quite logically, with the smaller sections, whose existence reflects the influence of contact and familiarity.

Kindred

This extension of the individual family comprises all relations whom one can name, i.e. for whom special kinship terms exist. The vernacular possesses no collective name for this largest kinship unit. Its range is circumscribed only indirectly, by the criterion of the applicability of kinship terms. This collective entity is, in fact, not conceived of as such, but rather as a set of specific categories of relationship. This is reflected in the kinship terminology, which tabulates the recognized forms of relationship. The collective concept nevertheless reflects a social reality; for it defines the widest range of individuals with whom relationships are, as it were, pre-ordained. Outside that range you no longer have the guidance of general principles: you must let yourself be guided by such casual criteria as expediency or individual predilections.

The kinship terms (listed in the chart below) are largely also terms of address. They are replaced by personal names in the narrowest kinship unit, the biological family, where parents call their children, brothers and sisters each other, and a husband his wife, by their names. The same address may also be assumed in special cases to symbolize a newly acquired intimacy (e.g. between a man and his sister-in-law—*see* p. 103). The widest boundary of the kindred is equally marked by the change to address by name. In the conspicuous context of speech situations the kindred is once more manifest as a 'social reality'.

Kinship Terminology

Relationship	Heiban	Otoro
Grandfather (pat. and mat.) Grandmother (pat. and mat.) Grandchildren	*Kurna*; pl. *gurneri*	*Kurna, Kurninya*; pl. *lugurneri*
Father	*Babo*	*Babo*
Mother and her co-wives	*Nana*	*Nana*
Father-brother	like father	like father
Father-sister	like mother	like mother
Mother-brother	*Kwigreri*	*Kwigreri*
Mother-sister	like mother	like mother

[1] This does not mean than clan unity is not fostered and revived, indirectly, also by other institutions, especially kinship ceremonials like birth or burial rites, the congregation of which is largely (though not exclusively) organized on clan lines.

Kinship Terminology—continued

Relationship	Heiban	Otoro
Father-brother's wife Mother-brother's wife	like mother	like mother
Father-sister's husband Mother-sister's husband	like father	like father
Son, daughter	*Dare*	*Dare*
Brother, sister (full)	*Magari* (*nana gwatipau*, i.e. of one mother)	*Magari*
Brother, sister (half)	*Magari* (*babo gwatipau*, i.e. of one father)	*Magari* or *Nyiwero*
Father-brother's children Father-sister's children Mother-brother's children Mother-sister's children	like brother, sister	*Magari* or *Nyiwero*
Brother's children	like son, daughter	like son, daughter
Sister's children	like mother-brother	like mother-brother
Husband	*Koma*	*Kominya*
Wife	*Kwa*	*Kwa*
Wife's parents Husband's parents Son's wife Daughter's husband	*Kuna*; pl. *kuneri*	*Duna*; pl. *luneri*
Brother's wife	*Kwiga*	*Kwiga*, *Kwigeri*
Sister's husband	*Kwayer*	*Dweri*
Wife's brother, sister	like sister's husband	like sister's husband
Husband's brother, sister	like brother's wife	like brother's wife
Mother's clan (collectively)	*Tugru*	*Dmar*
Father's clan (collectively)	*Kware*	*Erido*

The kinship terminology of the two tribes (as, in fact, of most Nuba tribes) is of the type known to anthropologists as classificatory. In such a system the kinship terms do not follow the various kinds and degrees of real, i.e. biological, relationship, but class a number of such degrees in a common category. Instead of specific terms, expressing the biological relationship itself, or descriptive terms, defining the derivation of kinship degrees from biological relationships (e.g. father-brother, mother-sister's child), we have comprehensive categories in which the shades of close and distant relationship largely disappear. We shall thus have to distinguish in every case between biological and sociological relationships bearing identical names (e.g. 'brother,' 'father')—names which, in our own society,

we are wont to associate with biological kinship.[1] We cannot enter here into a discussion of the nature and meaning of classificatory kinship terminologies. Suffice it to say that the common kinship term does not obliterate the awareness of biological differences or degrees of kinship, though they are left to emerge from the context rather than from the nomenclature itself; and that the extension of identical terms denotes in many cases identical social relations (i.e. rules of conduct entailed in the relationship), though this correspondence is neither rigid nor complete.

In the kinship system of Heiban and Otoro the terminological extension is derived from three main principles of identification. The first, which leads to a 'lateral' extension of kinship terms over all cognates of the same generation and clan, rests on the identification of brothers. As a father's brothers and sisters are all classed as 'fathers' and 'mothers' (married to other 'mothers' and 'fathers'), the children of brothers and sisters are themselves 'brothers' and 'sisters' to each other, and 'sons' and 'daughters' to the parent generation. It is easy to see that this identification entails an (at least theoretically) unlimited expansion of the single kinship group. For the kinship terms do not allow for the increasingly distant biological relationship of cognates in successive generations, but repeat themselves, each generation of 'brothers' being succeeded by another generation of 'brothers'. The second principle of identification is reciprocal, and works across clan and generation. It leads to mother-brother and sister-son, or parents- and children-in-law, being known (and calling each other) by identical names. The logic of this principle is disturbed by the nomenclature of the mother-brother's wife, who is called 'mother', and of the mother-brother's children, who are known to their cousins in the other clan as 'brothers' and 'sisters' and to the parent-generation as 'sons' or 'daughters'. The third principle establishes another reciprocal identification between agnates in intermittent generations, i.e. grandparents and grandchildren. We note further that, with the exception of the terms for father and mother, and mother's brother and mother's sister, the kinship terminology takes no account of sex differences; in order to make it clear whether you mean a son or daughter, brother or sister, brother-in-law or sister-in-law, you have to add the words 'man' or 'woman' to the particular kinship term.

The extent of the correspondence between identical kinship terms and social relations will become clear from the examination of the various social contexts in which kinship factors are effective, above all, marriage, the bringing up of children, and inheritance. I may, again, anticipate the main facts. We shall see that the 'identification of brothers' is borne out by the laws of marriage and inheritance: brothers, both biological and classificatory, marry each other's widows, inherit each other's

[1] Our own kinship terms are partly specific (as in father, son, daughter, brother, sister) and partly classificatory, though only in a narrow compass (as in uncle, aunt and cousin, or in the names for in-laws).

property and become the (adoptive) fathers of their brother's children when their own fathers die. The sociological father is thus, from the viewpoint of his classificatory sons, a potential 'real' father. Classificatory brothers and sisters, moreover, fall like biological brothers and sisters under the incest law and are forbidden to intermarry; nor may 'sons' and 'daughters' marry any relation whom they call 'mother' or 'father'—with one exception: in Otoro a widow may marry her husband-sister's son, who calls her 'mother' and is known as her 'son'. The identification of grandfather and grandson (incidentally a widespread feature among primitive tribes) expresses an important educational principle. For while parents (real or classificatory) are expected to exercise discipline, and beat their children if they are naughty or disobedient, grandparents are never the family disciplinarians or stern seniors; on the contrary, they are on the most friendly and equal footing with their grandchildren, and would take their part against a harsh father or mother, thus identifying themselves with the child with whom they share the kinship name. I may add that fathers regard the beating of boys as their prerogative, as they, in turn, consider it the mother's business to punish the girls; but a father also dislikes seeing a girl beaten in his presence, while his wife would never interfere with the disciplinary actions which he might mete out to the boys. The identical terms for in-laws, finally, correspond to reciprocal rules of etiquette, certain severe avoidances which characterize their relationship in Otoro and Heiban (as in many primitive tribes).

The identical term for mother-brother and sister-son expresses the specific kinship bond between the nearest male relations in the mother's line. The common term for full-brother and half-brother, on the other hand, disregards certain important differences in their position in the kinship system, especially with regard to the rights of inheritance and the obligations of levirate marriage. The Otoro system has an optional special term for half-brother; this difference in the kinship terminology of the two tribes—the only relevant difference—appears correlated with the slightly greater weight of maternal affiliation in Otoro.

Translated into terms of conduct, the kinship relations fall largely in our first category of rights and obligations typical of groups—rights and obligations bearing on specific institutions (marriage, system of inheritance). Like the clan, the kindred also possesses its 'pervasive' rights and obligations, its rules of conduct symbolic of the group structure. In the clan these rules of conduct mainly serve to define the social unit as such, contrasting relations within and without the group. In the kindred, with its highly differentiated internal structure, these rights and obligations define, above all, that internal structure and the relations between the different kinship categories: they crystallize in a 'kinship etiquette.'

It is framed in the familiar medium through which these tribes express social proximity and distance—eating avoidances. It is concerned mainly with relations by marriage and with the matrilineal relations in the

patrilineal society, especially mother-brother and sister-son. The matrilineal element also enters into another, singular and quite isolated, avoidance between half-brothers, which exists only in Otoro: half-brothers (i.e. of different mothers) may not touch each other with a wet hand, for example, when bathing together, or with an oily hand, lest they 'take their brother's strength away'. This avoidance does not, however, apply to small boys or old men. It excludes half-brothers from a very common mutual service among men, that of anointing each other with oil previous to some sportive or ceremonial event. It evidently symbolizes some hidden strain in this double allegiance to father's and mother's kin, and an assumed rivalry and jealousy between brothers born of different mothers, which are not, however, visible in general kinship life.

The general eating avoidance between different clans is broken in the case of maternal relations; here the kinship terminology proves an excellent guide, for it implies the simple rule that one may eat together with any relative whom one calls by one of the following terms: father, mother, grandparent, or brother and sister. The Otoro include the mother-brother in this list; the Heiban permit eating together of mother-brother and sister-son only after the latter is already married. In either case the two relatives may eat together only in the older man's house.

A man may not eat together with his brothers' wives. This *tabu* can be lifted in the case of an individual sister-in-law whom one has come to like specially, after she has been married three or four years. Nor may a man call his sister-in-law by her name until he is allowed to eat with her also. The cancellation of these avoidances goes hand in hand with the adoption of wives into their husband's clan, again symbolized in the permission to eat together, of which we shall hear more presently.[1]

The most severe rule of etiquette in this sense defines the behaviour of children-in-law towards their parents-in-law. While sons-in-law (and similarly daughters-in-law) may freely visit their parents-in-law or receive their visits in their own houses, they must never eat or drink with them, or even of their food. Unlike the other eating avoidances, which apply only to meat and milk, the parents-in-law *tabu* includes also the everyday meal, corn gruel. Moreover, children- and parents-in-law may not even see each other eat: if a son-in-law happened to be eating or drinking and saw his father- or mother-in-law come along the path, he would at once stop and wait until they are out of sight. This avoidance

[1] In Heiban the girls in the mission school were ordered *ex cathedra* to stop addressing their in-laws by the kinship terms and to call them by their names instead, evidently with some idea of breaking with an abstruse and heathenish formality. This reform provoked complaints to me, petitions to the D.C., and general resentment, which will hardly surprise anyone who has realized that kinship terms often stand for well-defined rules of conduct. Which anecdote should also dispel any lingering suspicions that kinship terminologies are merely of 'academic' interest.

is relaxed a little three or four years after marriage, when the wife will bring meat from her parents' house, which the husband may then eat. The *tabu* on eating together or in the presence of each other remains unchanged.

To understand this rigid *tabu*, we must realize the full meaning of eating together in marriage. Husband and wife may not eat together, and the wife may not eat meat or drink milk in her husband's house until she has borne him one or two children—in other words, until the intimacy of family life has replaced the early sexual intimacy of marriage. The eating avoidances in marriage and between in-laws thus reveal two different aspects: one refers to the adoption of the wife into the husband's clan; the other seems to express, symbolically, sexual shame. It is significant that the eating avoidance between brother- and sister-in-law only applies to relations of opposite sex; it is, moreover, accompanied by another *tabu* of clearly sexual origin, forbidding brothers- and sisters-in-law to bathe together in a stream. Eating together is thus associated with sexual intimacy. This thought is expressed most forcibly in the parents-in-law *tabu*—to watch a son-in-law eat means to watch him perform an act tantamount to the consummation of marriage. The avoidance expresses the strong feeling of shame with which a man's and wife's parents react to their children's sexual union. This interpretation of the in-law avoidance is borne out by a significant restriction on erotic conversation. It applies primarily to Heiban—but then only in Heiban is sex such an overt and favourite topic in conversation. There men talk freely and with gusto about their amorous experiences, indulging in detailed accounts of the intimacies of marital life. They think nothing of carrying on this conversation in the presence of women and even their own wives; but they would stop at once should their wives' brothers or parents be present.

We have already stated that no collective conception corresponding to the 'kindred' exists. We can now see that the definition of this social unit is of necessity fluid. The social effectiveness of the group is determined, not only by the theoretically established kinship bonds, but also by the factors of contact and familiarity which, similarly as in the clan, reduce the 'theoretical' kindred to a narrower concrete grouping. The kinship terminology defines an essentially infinite group of (in theory) unlimited growth. The number of descendants, cognates, and in-laws multiplies with every generation. This constant expansion is limited concretely by the toll of death, and from the viewpoint of reckoning descent, by the limitations of memory. True, relationships are recognized, individuals classed as 'brothers', 'fathers', and so forth, though it may no longer be possible to trace them back to a concrete source. But it is clear that this knowledge will tend to survive or disappear according to the support it can derive from personal contacts. Distant relations who never see each other, or live too far apart to join in the traditional occasions for kinship meetings (ceremonies, kinship feasts), will soon lose track of the changes

that are occurring in each other's families, and eventually of their relationship itself.

These occasions for kinship meetings—the 'integrative institutions' of the kindred—must be omitted from the present description. I will mention here only one related religious custom in Heiban, which lends to the kinship unit a visible emblem and focus.

Every family head in Heiban possesses a hereditary sacrificial spear, which is kept in the house of his senior wife until both he and she have died, when it will be handed on to the eldest son. All the more important sacrifices must be performed with this spear and by the man who owns it. Sons or younger brothers who, after their marriage, have moved to a distant place, will be given a separate sacrificial spear by their father or eldest brother. But the new spear would only be used in minor rituals, and must first be consecrated in a special rite in which the original spear is used; the new spears thus represent, as it were, an offspring of the parent spear. The sacred spear is, then, a focus or symbol neither of the kindred nor yet of the clan: it comes to symbolize the unity of the patrilineal section of the steadily growing family.

Here we are led towards a new problem: the co-existence, in the same social system, of the two diverse principles of kinship organization—the clan, and the family and kindred. The fundamental difference between the clan and the family or kindred lies in the method of defining membership and the rights and obligations entailed in it. The clan is 'unilateral', and recognizes only one—the paternal—line of descent. The kindred (like the family, from which it is derived) is 'bilateral' in the sense that it establishes its net of relationships on the recognition of both paternal and maternal line of descent. Modern anthropology has realized that there are no strictly 'unilateral', exclusively patrilineal or matrilineal, kinship systems, and that it is thus impossible to distinguish sharply between 'unilateral' and 'bilateral' social structures. Rather we find a varying balance between the two methods of reckoning relationship. Such a balance is clearly typical also of our two Nuba tribes. The kinship terminology, with its relationship terms extending almost symmetrically over paternal and maternal side, is visible evidence of the fact that the unilateral clan does not simply overrule family bonds in the bilateral sense. The patrilineal clan, on the other hand, claims recognition in spheres in which, from the viewpoint of the family, the maternal bond should be predominant. Here are instances of this twofold orientation.

The exogamous marriage system in Heiban forbids marriage, not only within one's own (i.e. the paternal) clan, but also into the clans of mother and paternal grandmother. In Otoro homicide in the maternal and paternal clan alike is regarded as that most hideous of crimes, which man cannot punish. We shall also hear of a certain legal practice in Otoro which decrees that, in the case of homicide between clans, a relative of the murderer should take the place of the victim in the latter's family; the exchanged individual must come from the maternal clan of the murderer.

Paternal and maternal relations, moreover, share in almost all ceremonial activities.

In Heiban every adult man can name a certain relation on the mother's side, a woman or—more rarely—a man, whom he calls *konyara* and about whom he learns through his mother on reaching adulthood. In theory, the mothers of the two *konyara* should have the same maternal grandmother; but the female ancestress is rarely remembered, so that in practice the *konyara* relationship appears reduced to meaning that the mothers of the two *konyara* are classificatory sisters (of uncertain biological relationship).[1] As this relationship is only transferable through women, and as the *konyara* themselves are a man and a woman or two men, the *konyara* relationship has no continuity and is re-formed in each successive generation. When one of the two *konyara* dies, he (or she) is succeeded by a brother or sister. The *konyara* as well as their brothers or sisters are forbidden to marry. The main bond between them, however, is of a ritual character.

In the ceremony of the Filling of the Granaries, especially, these two persons must exchange gifts and generally co-operate. I will mention only the most interesting, final phase in this ritual co-operation: it consists in a mock theft of a fowl by the man from the house of his *konyara* and a mock pursuit of the 'thief' by the *konyara's* brothers, which has the aim of stopping him from 'carrying away the fertility of the land'. This overt symbolism dramatizes an antagonism between paternal and maternal kinship groups which springs, as we shall see, from another 'theft' of another 'fertility'—marriage itself.[2]

A most conspicuous 'matrilineal' trait is embodied in the naming of children. The Heiban and Otoro males have two names: an adult name, which they assume during adolescence and of which we shall hear more later, and a first name, bestowed on the new-born. Women have only the latter name. Now the number of these birth names is very limited; there exist altogether only six different names, which are meant to express the order of birth of children of the same mother. Characteristically, the people speak of these names as 'mother-names'. The order of names, incidentally, is continued even if a child dies immediately after birth. The first-born child is invariably called Koko if it is a boy, and Kama if a girl. A second male child is called Kwodi, a female child Kuci. The third child is named Ngolo, or Kaci; the fourth, Komi, or Konyo; the fifth, Koco, or Kabay; the sixth, Konda, or Koto. Afterwards the order of names is repeated.

Finally, we also meet with the emphasis of paternal bonds in a context which is the paramount expression of maternal importance. I am referring to the institution of *couvade*, or 'paternal confinement'. It implies,

[1] The *konyara* relationship also exists in Koalib. There it is true to its theoretical derivation from a common maternal great-grandmother (see p. 370).

[2] We shall later speak of the 'marriage by capture' in Heiban, which identifies marriage with a title of 'possession' and the wedding with a 'theft'. This custom and the *konyara* ritual are complementary features of the same institution.

in short, that the father shares all the avoidances and observances of the woman in confinement: he must not wash or do his hair until the time for the final purification rite has come; he must not stir from the hut, nor do any manual work. If he did, he would, like the woman who breaks these rules, endanger the life of the new-born.

However, though co-existing, patrilineal and matrilineal influences are not of equal weight in the social life of the tribe. The social identity of the individual is derived exclusively from clan membership, i.e. patrilineal descent. In inheritance, too, patrilineal descent is the paramount factor. In the various rights and obligations referring to marriage and bride-price paternal relationship is more important than maternal, but both are conspicuously involved.

The two principles of kinship organization must come into conflict in marriage, over the social position of the wife, who, coming from a different clan, forms together with her husband the nucleus of the new family. This conflict is resolved by means of a formal adoption of the wife into the husband's clan after she has borne him one or two children, or, if the marriage happened to remain childless, after she has lived with him for from three to four years. This adoption takes the form of the sacrifice of a pig or goat and a communal meal of the husband's clan relations in which the wife joins; in this ritual context she performs for the first time the act which is the paramount expression of clan fellowship—eating meat together. At this ritual meal the wife still keeps apart from the other guests; she must behave in a shy and embarrassed fashion (although in ordinary life she has met the guests on friendly and natural terms) and must let herself be coaxed into accepting her share of the meat. In Otoro the husband rubs the meat first against her lips, as though he had to force her to accept the food. Even afterwards a wife would not eat in the presence of her husband or, for that matter, other men (though she would now freely eat meat and drink milk in her husband's house), until she has passed the climacteric. But this avoidance is no longer associated with clan differences, but with (evidently sexual) 'shame'.

The completeness of the adoption into the husband's clan differs in the two tribes: in Otoro the complete adoption is symbolized in the burial of wives in accordance with the ritual direction of their husband's clan; in Heiban the ritual direction observed in the burial of wives is that of their own clans. This symbolism of complete and incomplete adoption is correlated with important rights and obligations connected with marriage—namely, the right of a husband to claim a refund of the bride-price in the case of the barrenness or premature death of his wife. We shall discuss this aspect of marriage law presently in detail. Here we may point out that the claims to a refund of the bride-price obtain only in Heiban—the group where adoption of the wife into the husband's clan is 'incomplete'. Here the wife remains, legally, a member of her own clan, and her death or her barrenness throw on her kinship group the responsibility for a marriage which, from the husband's point of view,

has proved a failure. The wife, one might almost say, is only 'borrowed' from her own clan for the purpose of founding a new family and producing offspring for her husband's clan. Clan and family remain, in the last instance, separate entities.

This divergence in two groups so closely akin in social structure is puzzling. The complete and incomplete adoption of wives can be correlated with certain cultural traits which vary correspondingly (e.g. the refund of the bride-price, or the obligation of levirate marriage). But this correspondence is broken in other fields; thus the complete adoption in Otoro appears together with the eating-avoidances between half-brothers—sons of different wives who are yet equally adopted into the husband's clan. Nor does the correspondence hold good for other Nuba tribes, where complete adoption may be combined with refund of the bride-price. Nor yet can the adoption of wives be linked with the factor of physical propinquity of the inter-marrying sections. Thus incomplete adoption exists both in compact Heiban and scattered Laro; and the (to-day) dispersed Otoro marry as often in the single locality as outside. We can quote only one, more abstract, correlation. The Otoro, as other Nuba tribes which practise complete adoption, also absorb alien groups into their tribal structure; while Heiban (once more with a number of Nuba tribes) subscribes to neither form of 'adoption'. Perhaps, then, we may speak of a general bend towards accretion—be it on the plane of the clan or of the tribal unit.[1]

In conclusion, we must mention two other forms of adoption into clan and kinship group. The first, blood brothership, exists only in Heiban. Blood brothers are called, and call each other, *tgor*, which means 'heart'. The name is derived from the fashion in which blood brothership is concluded—by eating together the heart of a goat killed specially for this purpose.[2] The relationship between blood brothers is modelled in every respect on that of real brothers, above all, with regard to the marriage rules valid for themselves as well as their sisters and children (though not brothers). Blood brothers must attend one another's family feasts; they are, naturally, exempted from the eating avoidances between clans; they are expected to help and aid one another in every way, and may even inherit one another's property. This relationship exists only between men, being usually assumed between young men of fairly equal age. It is most widespread: nearly every man I met in Heiban had a blood brother. But a man may have only one blood brother—while he may have numerous friends. Psychologically, blood brothership represents only a more intimate and permanent form of friendship. Sociologically, it is less an 'adoption', i.e. the absorption of a new group

[1] This suggestion, based on no comparative data from other societies, is not intended as a generalization. It merely points to a cultural consistency in the Nuba Mountains.

[2] One may also eat the liver (*kawe*) or the leg of the animal (*dumani*), in which case the blood brothers call each other by these names, though the institution would always be known as *tgor*.

member, than an extension of kinship bonds over otherwise separate kindreds. This institution thus adds to the existing cross-links in society, and so to its integration. Here we understand its limitation—to one individual on each side, whose brothers are excluded from the relationship. If it were not so, the cross-links would be too many, and the pattern too confused. Even so, the ensuing marriage avoidances must, in this small tribe, seriously reduce the scope of exogamous marriage. They add to the things forbidden, and so to the stress which, as we shall see, marks sex morality in Heiban.

If this 'adoption' links group with group, the other form—an adoption proper—serves to expand the single family and kindred. It used to obtain in both tribes, and concerned captured slaves. Captured slaves were occasionally sold to other tribes. But more often, especially in the case of young captives who proved nice and amiable fellows, the slaves were adopted into the family of their captors. The adoption was complete: the slave—slave no longer—was regarded as the son of the family head; he called his new relations by the appropriate kinship terms, and was bound to the same marriage rules and avoidances as real sons.

Marriage

Marriage is very nearly universal in these (as in all) Nuba tribes. There are no spinsters and hardly any bachelors. With the exception of lepers, lunatics, and certain sexual perverts known as *tomere*, all men marry. Even cripples and the deaf and blind marry, though they may have to wait a long time, until they have collected the bride-price or found an oldish widow whom no one else would have. Nor do social disqualifications exist. Although marriages between different tribes are not very numerous (e.g. Heiban-Laro, Heiban-Koalib, Heiban-Otoro, Otoro-Tira, or even Otoro-Arab), they are never objected to on principle. A father might dislike to see his son marry a girl of objectionable parents—say, the daughter of a father who is a thief or of a mother suspected of witchcraft; but he would raise no serious objections, for the girl, as he would argue, is not, after all, responsible for her parents. The father of a girl might look askance at a suitor who has the reputation of being cruel, who is known to beat his other wives, or who is always beating his bride; but a promise on the suitor's part to mend his ways will usually satisfy the future father-in-law.

The only prohibitions of marriage are those embodied in kindred and clan. The kinship definition of forbidden degrees covers, first of all, marriage with all relations whom one calls brother or sister, father or mother. Besides, a man may not marry two sisters (not even one after the other, after the first has died), nor two full-brothers two full-sisters. Kinship rules and clan exogamy appear combined in the following prohibitions: of marriage into the mother's clan (marriage into the clans of the mother's co-wives being allowed); of marriage into the clan of a paternal grandmother (an illusory avoidance this, as many do not know

their father's mother's clan); and of the marriage of brothers and (or) sisters—full-brothers and sisters in Heiban, and both kinds in Otoro—into the same clan. Finally, in Heiban a man may not marry two wives of the same clan, though he may do so in Otoro. 'Clan' in Heiban is always the 'theoretical' clan, in Otoro the smaller, more fluid clan section.

Like endogamous marriage, actual marriage in defiance of these rules and prohibitions is considered impossible, and any discussion of sanctions meaningless. But incestuous sexual commerce with women whom one must not marry is conceivable. As a crime, it ranks with another incestuous relationship, adultery with a kinswoman (i.e. any female relation in the kindred, including sisters-in-law and mother's co-wives). But again there is a sharp distinction in the moral appreciation, though not in the terminology, between incest in the narrow sense—in the biological family—and pseudo-incest with classificatory 'mothers' or 'fathers', 'sisters', or 'brothers'. The attitude of the people towards the former is one of disbelief that such things ever happen; when I discussed this question with informants they looked at each other in wonder how anyone could be foolish enough to consider such a possibility seriously. They were ready to admit that cases of this kind might happen in other tribes, but they had never heard of them in their own. They also admitted incest dreams; but then, who took such dreams seriously? Of incest in the wider sense, with classificatory relations or in-laws, they spoke in anger and disgust. It does happen—I have myself recorded two cases in Heiban (adultery with a father-brother's wife and a brother's wife). No one would eat meat or drink milk with the offenders, who would be virtually ostracized by their clans.[1] But often enough these clandestine incestuous relationships might never be discovered—until some day leprosy would appear in the kinship group and thus reveal that incest had been committed. In Heiban, the sanction of leprosy is assumed to follow any incestuous relationship. The fear of leprosy extends even to actions merely symbolic of sexual intimacy: thus when a man eats and drinks for the first time with his *konyara* (who belongs to his maternal clan), he puts a certain root believed to prevent leprosy into the beer of which the two will drink. The Otoro are, again, markedly less exercised over the contingencies of incestuous intercourse: they believe in the penalty of leprosy only in the case of grave incest: with 'sisters' and a father's other wives (i.e. one's own mother's co-wives).

Both groups recognize one final type of forbidden marriage, equally sanctioned by leprosy, but barred by clan laws of a different order: marriage between families between which there has been blood feud.

Courtship starts very early. Boys of thirteen to fifteen already look round for a bride, whom they would find among the girls of eight to twelve. Boys and girls get to know each other out on the farms or at the

[1] In the two cases which happened in Heiban the two offenders eventually killed themselves.

various dances and ceremonial occasions which periodically unite the people of different settlements and communities. For a few months this courtship remains a private matter of the young people. The boy will visit his girl in the evenings or at night in the girls' hut where she sleeps (we shall hear more of this arrangement), for a chat and some innocent or not so innocent sexual play: the former—the conventional petting of all Nuba tribes—takes the form of squeezing the breasts of the girl; the latter, of what the Otoro call the 'petting of the pubic apron'. He makes her small gifts—of beads, ochre for her coiffure, scent—and the girl retaliates with appropriate presents. She will single out her would-be-lover at dances and watch him at the tribal sports. At big gatherings and dances the lovers will disappear together 'in the bushes', and when the boy returns, with a streak of ochre across his chest—the souvenir of a hurried embrace or possibly a conscious sign of his amorous allegiance—his age mates will point at him and chaff him about his conquest. Eventually, when the friendship has grown into serious affection, the boy will ask the girl's permission to speak with her parents. Otoro and Heiban boys are not constant lovers: if their advances are not reciprocated within two to three months, they turn to someone else; and if they are jilted after a prolonged courtship, they will soon console themselves.

The Otoro young man who has received the consent of his bride-to-be will secure the approval of his parents first, and afterwards present himself as a suitor to the girl's father. He will himself carry through the subsequent leisurely discussions and negotiations, which take from one to three months. This period of official courtship is known by a special name, *nyiwaragyo*. It begins with two or three informal visits to the house of the girl's parents, during which it would be bad form to broach already the question of marriage. During the next visit the discussion finally comes round to the matter in hand. The girl's father will want to discuss the question first with his wife and brothers before he commits himself. He signifies his agreement by accepting a first gift from his future son-in-law—the 'beer of the skins', so called because it used to be brought by the suitor himself who, being a man, would carry it in a goatskin (and not in gourds or pots, which are women's vessels).[1]

In Heiban etiquette forbids a young suitor (though not an older man) to approach himself the girl's parents; he would, in native parlance, be 'afraid' and too shy, and would therefore ask an elder brother, a father-brother or mother-brother to act on his behalf. Again, the acceptance of a gift at the end of the period of official courtship (as a rule a spear or two) signifies the approval of the suitor.

In Heiban the last step of courtship—or first step of the marriage ceremonial—takes the form of a (conventionalized) capture of the bride. Unlike the Otoro bride, who is married from her parents' home, the

[1] This rule is no longer taken seriously, and women relatives of the bridegroom now carry his first gift in gourds or pots to his father-in-law's house.

bride in Heiban continues to sleep in the girls' hut till the day of the 'capture'. Warned by her mother, the girl knows what to expect, though neither mother nor daughter know precisely when to expect it. One morning, when the girl is as usual working in the field, the bridegroom collects four or five friends, all young men and mostly unmarried, to go out and kidnap the bride. All is done most realistically: there is a genuine struggle, the bride, aided by her girl friends, will fight tooth and nail and resist as best as she can. Eventually the men will chase away the other girls, haul the kicking bride up in the air, and carry her off to the house of her future mother-in-law. There the girl spends the day, ostensibly reconciled to her fate. But the same evening she will be taken back to her own mother's house, from where she will finally be married. This last turn proves convincingly the conventional nature of this marriage by capture. The usage itself seems intended to demonstrate the main characteristic of marriage in this tribe—the indefinite, ambilateral, social allegiance of bride and wife. Yet the apparent violence of the capture has led the Administration to forbid this practice—with (luckily or unluckily) little effect.

All these rules of courtship apply only to young or youngish men. Older men, who may be marrying their third or fourth wife, rarely bother to woo their future wife or to go through the formalities of courtship. The marriage is arranged entirely between the suitor and the girl's parents, and courtship is largely reduced to financial transactions. If the bridegroom attempted to pay his bride one of the customary nightly visits in order to anticipate some of the lesser joys of marriage, the girl might push him away indignantly, crying that she would have nothing to do with a man she hardly knew. Engagements of this kind are often repudiated by the girls, whereupon the disappointed bridegroom would sue her parents for having received the bride-price, but having failed to produce the bride.

The initial present to the bride's father is followed immediately by a second gift, which forms already part of the bride-price proper. This transaction establishes the marriage contract, and afterwards the man and the girl are regarded as publicly engaged. The period between this formal engagement and the final marriage ceremony, which is the prelude to the consummation of marriage, is filled out with the series of payments and gifts which make up the bride-price. The payments may be strung out over two to five years, in accordance with the economic position of the bridegroom as well as the age of the bride. The sexual maturity of the girl (judged by the development of her breasts) is the final criterion for fixing the marriage ceremony. The bride-price is called *kyoro*, which means literally 'goats' and metaphorically 'wealth' in general. It comprises gifts of widely varying nature and value, which are, however, all assessed and calculated in terms of the common units of exchange—goats. The bride's father would rarely state at once the full amount of the bride-price which he intends to demand. He renews his demands from time to

time, stipulating after every instalment the amount of the next payment, until a total is reached that is both acceptable to him and attainable by his future son-in-law. The latter keeps account of the payments by putting a blade of grass aside for every goat (or value of a goat) going out, tying the blades into bundles of five. When the total has reached a certain figure, he suggests to his father-in-law that the bride-price might now be considered adequate; if his suggestion was reasonable, he can feel certain that the girl's father will agree. It is an accepted thing, though, for the father-in-law to put his demands as high as possible, and for the son-in-law, in turn, to try to beat him down. So is haggling over the quality and value of the animals or commodities offered in bride-price. Yet a high bride-price is not considered a burden by the suitor. To marry with a low bride-price is shameful: it reflects both on the capabilities of the young man and his family and on the desirability of the bride.[1] Indeed, it would only be natural if a nice girl for whom a modest bride-price had been offered would be snapped up by a higher bidder. A low bride-price, moreover, would make it inconveniently easy for the girl's father to get out of the marriage contract (whatever his reasons) by refunding the payments already made.

At the same time, it is considered very unfair on the part of the girl's father to break his promise, for financial reasons only, to a suitor whose first gift he had already accepted. It was his duty, the people would argue, to inform himself beforehand about the prospects of his would-be son-in-law. Such change of mind is regarded as a breach of contract—a reversed 'breach of promise', as it were—in the legal sense, and is nowadays actionable in the Native Court. The girl, too, may undergo a change of heart in the years between engagement and marriage. This might lead to a test of strength between parents and a headstrong daughter and, if she chooses to settle the matter by eloping, would again end in court. Rather surprisingly, the men do not seem to change their minds in this fashion; at least, their fidelity is pawned with the first bride-price payment.

Amount and composition of the bride-price as well as the arrangement of the various payments differ considerably in the two groups and must thus be treated separately.

A typical bride-price in Heiban amounts to a total of eighty to one hundred 'goats' (i.e. £E.12–15), and is paid in goats, sheep, pigs, occasionally cattle, and a gun. It may be much higher if the bridegroom can afford it, and much lower if the girl's father likes him enough to make allowances for his relative poverty. The first gift, of eight to ten goats, is called *karene*, and is used by the girl's father for a big family feast and sacrifice at which the engagement is announced to family and clan. The second payment, *kyoro* or bride-price in the narrow sense, is as a rule

[1] The brother of a *divorcée* in Otoro whom her first husband had divorced because she was an incorrigible thief refused to accept a full bride-price for her when she married again, on the grounds that she was 'such a bad woman'.

distributed over several payments, the first of which must be fairly substantial (fifteen to twenty goats or a gun). A third payment, *agage*, which is paid concurrently with the bride-price in the narrow sense, is collected with the knowledge of the bride's father by certain clan relations of the bride, each receiving one to two goats. During this period the bridegroom must also make an annual gift of a pig or goat, called *orinyadalo*, to his bride's parents, grandmother, and mother-brother in turn. Finally, there is the obligation of the bridegroom to work, together with his friends and relations, on the cultivation of his future father-in-law an unspecified number of times every year during the period of engagement; this work is known as *wuna*—(work for the) 'in-laws'. The payments do not cease completely after the marriage. For when the wife has borne or is carrying her second or third child, two or three of her clan relations who have not previously received gifts from her husband may go to him now to collect a final gift, called *gre*, consisting of two to three goats. 'Collect' is an euphemism, for they are allowed to take it by force and without his permission if he declines or attempts to delay it too long.[1] This gift assures the good wishes of the wife's relations, indispensable to her continued fertility; its refusal would cause abortions or barrenness.

The Otoro bride-price is considerably lower than that of Heiban, amounting to a total (in money) of perhaps £E.6–10. Moreover, the various payments and gifts do not lend themselves as easily to calculation in money. They comprise thirty to fifty sheep or goats, two to three he-goats, ten to fifteen axe-heads, fifteen to twenty spear-heads or knives, twenty to forty cakes of tobacco (self-grown or purchased), twenty to thirty chickens, twenty to fifty guinea-fowls, twenty to thirty head-loads of grass for roofing, an occasional leg of gazelle brought back from a hunt, and five to ten pots of beer. The first gift is invariably that of a he-goat, and is called the 'Gift of Agreement', referring to the communal meal at which the girl's father informs his family and clan of the engagement. The order in which the subsequent gifts are made is not rigid. Usually there is a second gift of beer, called the 'Beer of the Gathering', which is accompanied by the delivery of the minor commodities implied in bride-price, such as knives, spears, axe-heads, guinea-fowls, &c. Again the bride's father calls a family gathering, this time to have them witness the first payment. The *kyoro* in the narrow sense follows in a number of instalments. Another gift of beer, the 'Beer of the Washing of Hands', is made as a rule immediately before or on the completion of the main bride-price payments; this 'washing of hands' is a symbolic gesture commonly announcing the conclusion of some ceremonial procedure. As in Heiban, annual work on the cultivation of the future father-in-law forms part of the economic obligations of the bridegroom.[2]

[1] This practice has recently been forbidden by the Administration.

[2] Older and wealthy suitors nowadays obtain release from the obligation of farm work by means of a payment in money.

STACKING GRAIN IN HEIBAN

THRESHING IN OTORO

Angreb-MAKER IN OTORO (CHUNGUR)

POTTERY 'FACTORY' IN TIRA (*see p.* 72)

A final gift of beer heralds the marriage ceremony itself (*taga*). All these gifts are made to the bride's father, who will distribute them among the various relations entitled to a share. Unlike in Heiban, the relatives of the bride may not claim gifts directly from the bridegroom; nor do these gifts continue after the marriage ceremony, nor, finally, are any of these gifts credited with a supernatural influence upon the prosperity of the marriage.

Now we must qualify our use of the terms 'engagement' and 'marriage'. The Nuba institutions differ essentially from our institutions of the same name. The 'engagement' in Heiban and Otoro means much more than a preliminary and possibly provisional settlement, and the marriage ceremony much less than the crucial and final phase. The contractual obligations begin with the first payment of the bride-price, and the actual consummation of marriage is largely regarded as the incidental implementation of this contract, which is dependent on such extraneous considerations as the maturity of the bride. In Heiban, as we have seen, a certain last bride-price payment is left till long after marriage. In both groups, moreover, the final phase of 'marriage' in our sense, the complete social identification of husband and wife, is only realized two to three years after the marriage ceremony. This conception of marriage is illustrated in the terminology. There is no special word for 'married' as against 'engaged'; the difference must be expressed, circuitously, by saying that 'the girl is in the husband's house'. Until then she is known as *nera*, 'girl'; once she is in her husband's house, she becomes a *kwa*, 'woman'; but she changes her name again after she has had one or two children, when she will be known as *marden*.

The bride-price has a counterpart in the dowry which every bride brings into marriage. It consists, first, of her personal belongings—the scanty clothing of the Heiban and Otoro woman, which she makes herself; a stock of pubic strips made of bark cloth, a present of her mother; ornaments; and her two sleeping boards, which her father cut for her when she was little. Secondly, there are various pots and pans for the new household; also a large stock of firewood (thirty to fifty headloads), collected by the bride together with her friends and relatives in the years between engagement and marriage. The bride takes much pride in this stack of firewood; indeed, if it fell short of expectations, she would be called lazy and a useless woman. Finally, the dowry includes produce and livestock: one to two baskets of beans, three to five baskets of grain, one basket of simsim, two baskets of groundnuts, six to ten goats, one pig, and three to five chickens. Like the bride-price, the dowry is carefully examined, and inferior gifts are rejected. The dowry in Otoro is a little bigger than in Heiban, where etiquette, moreover, demands that the bridegroom modestly refuse some of the animals offered him. With the exception of the personal belongings of the bride the dowry becomes the common property of husband and wife. Food and livestock are produced

by the girl's father and, to some extent, by the relatives who have received a share of the bride-price. But it is absolutely essential that these gifts come from their own stock; under no condition may they use the same animals which they had previously received as part of the bride-price. What counts is evidently the exchange as such—its formal and contractual rather than its purely economic aspect. Here we touch upon the question of the social function of bride-price.

We have already pointed out the significance of the bride-price as a transaction establishing a contract. We have also seen that it is a contract concluded, not between individuals, but between social groups—the clans and families to which the individuals belong. The bride's parents, her brothers, father-brothers and mother-brothers—in Heiban also her grandmother—are all beneficiaries under the bride-price. The bride's father and brothers, especially a brother who is as yet unmarried and himself collecting his bride-price, receive the largest shares. To a lesser extent distant relations and clan members benefit also, as they would be invited to the various family feasts arranged by the bride's father. Family and clan of the bridegroom in turn contribute jointly to his bride-price: his father first of all, and in varying degree his brothers, father-brothers, and mother-brothers. In Otoro the smaller items of the bride-price, like spears, axe-heads, tobacco, &c., are largely gifts of the bridegroom's clansmen, presented to him during the beer feast at which his engagement is publicly announced. We see that sharing in, and contributing towards, the bride-price represent essentially reciprocal rights and obligations: the same relatives who must pay part of the bride-price of a young man in their family are entitled to a share in the bride-price brought into the family by a girl's marriage.[1]

The joint payment of the bride-price of a young man, however, is limited to his first marriage. When a man marries his second or third wife he is already set up economically and must himself defray the costs of his marriage. There is, too, a moral aspect: the family of a young man makes itself responsible for his first marriage because it marks his graduation to full adulthood and full membership of the group; subsequent marriages do not concern the family as much; they are, as it were, individual luxuries. Modern economic changes, the possibility of paid labour open to the young men, have to some extent obscured this difference. To-day the young men are well able (and even expected) to pay themselves the larger part even of their first bride-price.

I may insert a few remarks on the scale of polygamy in the two tribes. The large majority of men in Otoro and Heiban have one or two wives. Statistically, then, a second wife does not represent a 'luxury', but still a very common standard. Men with three wives are much rarer; only very wealthy men have four, and only chiefs or sub-chiefs more

[1] This reciprocity transcends the single generation: the man who contributes to his brother's bride-price now might later benefit from the marriage of his brother's daughter.

than four wives (the paramount chief of Otoro topping the list with eight).[1]

The various relatives who are involved in the bride-price transactions on both sides act as so many witnesses and guarantors of the marriage contract. Its fulfilment is partly bound up with their own interest. For if the marriage were dissolved, the wife's relatives who had received the bride-price would have to find it again to refund it to the ex-husband. But if the kinship group thus guarantees marriage through the medium of the bride-price, marriage and bride-price in a sense also guarantee the kinship group. The reciprocal rights and obligations of different relations to share in or contribute towards the bride-price turn every marriage into an occasion for affirming and reviving the whole kinship system. The institution of the bride-price appears as a focus of kinship relations.

Social institutions are rarely defined by, or fulfil themselves in, single functions. The bride-price in the Nuba tribes serves at least two distinct social purposes. The second social function of the bride-price is expressed in the very name, 'bride-price'. Much has been said and written about the meaning of this institution and the term by which it should be called. Its implications of a purchase price paid for 'human chattel' rendered the term 'bride-price' suspect to many. Far from degrading the position of the woman, the bride-price gives her a definite status in the general social as well as legal sense of the word, and even helps to secure her a certain potential independence; for its economic *quid pro quo* represents a concrete and on the whole easily workable instrument for dissolving marriage (by means of a refund of the bride-price). But the bride-price is nevertheless a 'price', paid for an unusual commodity—the fertility of the woman—which the clan into which she was born releases for the benefit of the clan into which she marries. This aspect of the bride-price is revealed most clearly in the rules governing dissolution of marriage, either through death or divorce. Widows, as we shall see, are expected to remarry in a modified form of levirate, i.e. to marry a brother or at least a clansman of their late husband. No bride-price is payable in such a marriage, which preserves the woman's fertility for the clan. If the widow marries outside her late husband's clan, her new husband has to refund the bride-price to her brother-in-law who would otherwise have married her in levirate. Divorce, on whatever grounds, similarly implies the refund of the bride-price to the ex-husband. Until this final dissolution of the marriage contract, i.e. until the bride-price has been refunded, all children born by the woman—legitimate or illegitimate—are her husband's and belong to his clan. In our phraseology, her

[1] Here are statistical figures obtained from two random samples in Heiban and Otoro.

	Number of wives per man							*Total No. of men*	*Average per man*
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6–8		
Heiban ..	2	47	34	12	8	2	—	105	1·7
Otoro	1	31	43	10	5	2	1	93	1·9

'fertility' has not yet been redeemed, although the matrimonial union in the physical sense may have been dissolved long ago.

I have said above that the bride-price in the two tribes has 'at least two' distinct functions. There is a third, more blurred, and expressed more indirectly—namely, the establishment of that monopoly claim to sexual intimacy which is implied in the concept of marriage. Till the formal engagement and the first bride-price payment, a lover has no such claims on his bride-to-be. If he visits her in the evening and finds another man with her, he will simply withdraw and leave the field, at least for the time being, to his rival. But if this happens after the engagement, he is free (and expected) to fight for his rights and to beat up the interloper. There is no essential difference, in the opinion of the people, between the infringement of these pseudo-marital rights and adultery proper. Again, girls sometimes object to the 'petting' in the girls' hut; if there has been no engagement, the impetuous lover will have to stop. But if he has already the status of a bridegroom, he is entitled to beat her until she submits. He is not, however, supposed to push his attentions further until after marriage. But impatient bridegrooms are by no means rare. If the girl becomes pregnant her parents will try to hurry up the marriage and press for the completion of the bride-price payments. Very rarely will they allow the girl to join her not-yet-husband, even after the birth of the child. The impetuosity of the bridegroom is taken as a matter of course; the parents would only blame their daughter for having been 'so stupid'. And well they might, considering that the girls in Otoro and Heiban are all familiar with methods of preventing pregnancy.

The thought of sex and sexual satisfaction colours the whole attitude towards marriage. In Heiban it is overt and insistent to the extent of providing the favourite topic for male conversation. Newly married men, specially, love to discuss publicly their early marital experiences, to compare notes and boast of their erotic proficiency, not stopping at the most ludicrous overstatements. In Otoro, the physiological facts of marriage are kept in the background of things private and somewhat shameful and erotic conversations are relegated to the privacy of talks between two friends. In Heiban the 'possessive' aspect of marriage is more conspicuously symbolized in the conventional 'capture' of the bride, which forms the prelude of the wedding ceremony. In both tribes the thought of marriage as 'possession' mobilizes the same strong sentiments. Passionate jealousy often flares up in acts of violence and fights over woman or girl. Attacks and fights are regarded as legitimate responses and retaliations; moreover, like marriage itself, this passionate defence of matrimonial rights concerns, not only the individual, but his group, his friends and relations. Yet the 'possessive' aspect of marriage also tempers jealousy. Mostly it is the fear of having to relinquish the possession of his wife rather than anger over an occasional infidelity that incites the husband to these acts of vengeance. Indeed, if jealousy were not thus

tempered, the society would hardly hold together under the weight of the feuds and fights that break out over women.

Sex morality—marital and pre-marital—is extremely lax. Virginity of the bride is appreciated—vaguely and in a platonic fashion. It is rarely, if ever, a reality. The girls in Otoro and Heiban are familiar with methods of preventing childbirth or procuring an abortion. They range from pure superstitions, like pulling a string from the fringes of the pubic apron and burying it under the door of the sleeping hut (to dig it up again after marriage), to more empirical practices, e.g. massage of the abdomen and the use of strong laxatives: a preparedness all the more characteristic, as in this society, where girls marry as soon as they are sexually mature, the danger of an untimely pregnancy is comparatively small.

In conclusion we might ask if the lasting union of a man and woman implied in marriage also exists without the formalities, the contractual and ritual ties of marriage proper. The answer, valid for nearly all Nuba tribes, is—no. Wives may desert their homes and husbands and for a time live with their lovers; or girls may similarly attempt to force the man of their choice upon a reluctant family. But this union never lasts, and is soon either broken or legitimized. The main factor here is the bride-price, which the deserted husband will be unwilling to lose (together with the wife), and the woman's family anxious to recover (from the paramour). The bride-price, then, and the economic motives involved in it not only guarantee the concluded marriage, but also ensure against disregard of the institution itself. The free union of man and woman, however, may be an inevitable alternative, forced upon the lovers by impediments to marriage. This, too, is rare. Mostly the marriage prohibitions are sexual prohibitions also. Both are sometimes broken; exogamy has been ignored in the past, and may again be ignored in the future. But the tendency will still be to re-interpret the marriage ties, not to ignore them. Where such re-interpretation proves impossible the result may be tragic, and the disappointed lovers may choose exile or even suicide. Indeed, informants everywhere failed to see any justification for the free union. Illicit love, short 'affaires', they understood; but the circumvention of marriage was wholly alien to them.

Widowhood and Parentage

Widows who are still of marriageable age are expected, as we have heard, to marry a brother (real or classificatory) or a clan relative of their late husband. In Heiban, the half-brothers of the deceased have the first claim on the widow or widows; in Otoro, the full-brothers.[1] In Heiban, moreover, the same man may marry several of his late brother's widows, while the Otoro allow only one widow to each brother. These rules allow a certain latitude in the sense that widows are free to choose their new

[1] In Otoro, then, the emphasis is on the bilateral, in Heiban on the unilateral affiliation of the deceased. In Otoro, too, I found an isolated case of widow marriage with the late husband's sister-son. Informants stated that this variant of the levirate is sometimes adopted if there are no surviving brothers.

husband or husbands from the number of eligible brothers-in-law. In Otoro levirate marriage is (or was) very nearly compulsory. It is so strongly supported by public opinion that widows who dislike the proposed marriage sometimes seek escape in suicide. The Heiban attitude is much less rigid, which is possibly another expression of that incomplete adoption of the wife into the husband's clan of which we have spoken before: remaining half outside it, the wife cannot be expected to identify herself as completely and for life with the kinship group of her husband. Old widows beyond childbearing age do not as a rule remarry, but stay on, alone, in their late husband's house or go to live with a brother or son (more rarely a daughter).[1]

After the death of the husband the widow must wait one or two years before it would be decent for her to remarry. This interval clearly ensures that a widow who was with child, or who had just borne a child, when her husband died should be able to give birth to it or wean it before marrying again. During this time she stays in her late husband's house. If she remarries in levirate, she will stay there for another year after the remarriage before joining her new husband in his house. There is no marriage ceremonial, but a certain ritual must be performed before the consummation of the marriage, to placate the spirit of the dead husband. A he-goat is killed and later eaten; its blood is sprinkled over the doorpost (Otoro) or over the bed which the widow will share with her new husband (Heiban), and the faeces taken from the entrails of the animal are smeared on the outside wall of the hut. The people present (all of the clan of the deceased) address the spirit thus: 'Our brother—no one has killed him with a knife or spear [i.e. there are no claims to blood revenge to be satisfied.] God caused his death. To-day we make this sacrifice so that you [the deceased] may come and take the goat and depart. Depart with a clean heart [without anger]. We all desire that this woman should not go to other people [marry into another clan]. She shall stay with our brother [i.e. clansman]. We make this sacrifice because she stays as his wife.'[2]

If there are small children, the widow will take them with her; if the children are old enough, they will stay in their father's house until they grow up and marry. In either case, their mother and her levirate husband—the sociological father of the children—will look after them and later provide their bride-price and arrange their marriage.

A widow who marries outside her late husband's clan may move straight into her new home. There is no 'wedding' ceremonial, nor any special ritual of conciliation—the jealousy of the dead husband extending apparently only to his clansmen—except, a year or two later, the usual adoption and meat-eating rite (which is, in turn, unnecessary in levirate

[1] In Heiban I recorded the case of an old widow who went to live with an old man of her late husband's clan in a nominal marriage; her new 'husband', apart from being an old man, was known to be a eunuch.

[2] The faeces of the sacrificial animal are food for the spirit of the dead, as are also the bits of meat, especially liver, kidneys, and entrails, which will be smeared on a tree or rock when the people sit down to the meal that concludes this rite.

marriage). The new husband pays the bride-price to the brother of the deceased who would have married the widow had she remarried in levirate, and who will divide the bride-price among his other brothers and those relations who had contributed to the original bride-price. Bigger children are as a rule at once adopted by this father-brother, who also takes over the house and land of their father (see below). Smaller children, up to the age of seven or eight, go with their mother. Her second husband may in this case claim a small reduction of the bride-price as a compensation for this, mostly temporary, adoption of her children. Boys will leave their mother and stepfather and join the household of the father-brother when they are eight or ten (that is, old enough to start herding sheep and goats); girls stay in their stepfather's house until they marry. But their suitors will address themselves, not to the stepfather, but to the girl's sociological father, from whose house she will eventually be married and to whom her bride-price must be paid. Of this bride-price a goat or two will be paid to the stepfather for having looked after the girl all these years.

We can, with the people, reduce the various rules of adoption and widow marriage to the simple formula: 'children go with the bride-price'. The brother-in-law who receives the bride-price for the widow must also look after her children. But there are exceptions; again the rules seem laxer, and individual preferences or idiosyncrasies are given more latitude, in Heiban than in Otoro. I have met a young man whose father died when he was a boy, who was first adopted by his father-brother, then, disliking him, tried his mother-brother, and, finally, let himself be adopted by a stranger. This last adoption, by strangers, seems limited to Heiban, and occurs mainly when a fatherless young man finds his other potential 'fathers' stingy over his bride-price; the adoptive father is, in fact, known as 'father of the bride-price'. Another case was that of a Heiban man who married a widow and, when this marriage remained childless, adopted her children by her first husband. These adoptions entail no special formality or ceremonial. Nor are they adoptions in the full sense of the word, for they do not affect the clan membership of the adopted children. The departure from the regular practice creates at once a complicated legal situation, as adoptive as well as kinship relations would claim a share in the bride-price paid for an adopted daughter. The simple rule, 'children go with the bride-price', is replaced by the vaguer viewpoint of equity: if you adopt a girl and pocket her bride-price, it is only fair that you should share it with her kinship relations and, if she has a brother, adopt him too, and in turn pay his bride-price.

In Otoro the present rules governing widow marriage outside the clan and adoption of children seem to have replaced an older custom which obtained till twenty or thirty years ago. This original custom, half-forgotten to-day, is difficult to ascertain. Moreover, non-levirate widow marriages were so rare that there is hardly any evidence available. It seems that small children, who would go with the mother, were regarded

fully as her second husband's children. He took the bride-price for girls when they married, and supplied his adopted sons with land and bride-price when they grew up. Some informants maintain that this adoption of children even implied a change of their clan membership. The widow's husband also seems to have been entitled to claim a reduction of the bride-price payable for the widow if her small children by the first husband went to their father-brother instead of to him.

We thus find a curious reversal of the rules concerning the bride-price for widows: to-day, the widow's husband can claim a reduction of the bride-price if he has to adopt, even temporarily, his wife's children; formerly, he could claim a similar reduction if his wife brought no children into the second marriage. The paternal kin group has evidently strengthened its claim to the offspring of its deceased members, even to the extent of reimbursing the temporary stepfather for his outlay on food, on 'medical' treatment or sacrifices in the case of illness, and similar expenses which he incurred while looking after the children. It is difficult to see why this should be so. So far as we can judge from the scanty and partly contradictory material, it seems that only two factors can have been responsible for this change: the (undoubted) increase in the number of non-levirate marriages and the (less certain) fall in the birth-rate. While non-levirate marriages were few, and children many, the kin group could ignore the occasional loss of future members. It can apparently do so no longer.[1]

Widows—like *divorcées*—bring no dowry into the marriage. The bride-price demanded for a widow, however, is not *ipso facto* lower than that paid for a girl. For a young and still attractive widow the full original bride-price must be paid (with the possible deduction only of the small reimbursements mentioned above). In the case of a middle-aged widow who is not likely to have many suitors, it is considered fair that her family should agree to a considerably reduced bride-price. But the concern with the 'fertility' which the bride-price 'buys' may overrule this economic evaluation of failing youth and attraction. If a middle-aged widow who had been childless or had had only one or two children in her first marriage thought of marrying outside her late husband's clan, her in-laws would still demand the full original bride-price from her prospective second husband; for—in the words of an Otoro informant—they 'would be angry'; in other words, they would feel that their kinship group had not fully benefited from the reproductive faculties of the woman. This viewpoint gains fullest expression in Heiban; here it amounts to a legal title of the husband and his family to claim compensation from the relatives of a wife who had been found wanting in this respect.

In Otoro no such claims are admissible. Nor can the Otoro

[1] The people themselves offer this explanation: children, especially boys, are now 'more valuable' since they go out to work for wages. This is clearly a rationalization; for male children were as valuable in the past—for farm work, the herding of livestock, or the perennial tribal warfare.

husband demand a refund of the bride-price in the case of a premature death of his wife, unless she died before the consummation of the marriage; once the marriage has been consummated all such claims lapse, even if the wife 'died the next day' (to quote a legally-minded informant).

In Heiban the consummation of marriage does not affect the legal position. The husband of a wife who died when still in childbearing age and before having provided him with sufficient offspring is entitled to a partial refund of the bride-price. The refund is calculated primarily on the number of children she had borne (including children who died), and amounts to the total original bride-price, minus twenty goats for every daughter, ten goats for every son, and another twenty goats for the wife herself. Taking a bride-price of eighty goats as an average, the birth of two to three children would square the account. The husband of a barren wife, moreover, can, after seven years of childless marriage, claim the refund of half the bride-price (while keeping the wife). In theory, this refund is meant to enable him to take another, additional, wife. But if the husband has been happy with his wife he will be content with considerably less than the legal refund—with a small earnest to show that his in-laws appreciate his position.

The various refunds allowed in Heiban marriage law must be claimed from the relations who received the bride-price, i.e. in a first marriage from the wife's father and brothers, and in a second marriage from the family of her first husband. All the ex-husband's relations who contributed to the original bride-price are, in turn, entitled to a share in the refund. There is no time limit to these claims. Frequently they are not stated at once, but years later, even after the ex-husband himself has died, when a particular relative finds himself in need of money. A confused legal situation may be the result, in which the original claim appears hopelessly entangled with counter-claims and other similar demands which have been established subsequently. Take the following case. A widow, the mother of a boy and a girl who were both little when she lost her husband, married in second marriage outside her first husband's clan. Her second husband, a certain Uber, paid the full original bride-price to her late husband's family. The second marriage was childless, and Uber kept the children. He took the bride-price for the girl when she married, and contributed to the bride-price of the boy. He did not, however, as he ought to have done, return part of the girl's bride-price to her brother and father-brothers. He argued that as his wife had not given him children he would have been entitled to a refund of half the bride-price; instead of claiming this refund from her first husband's family, he reimbursed himself by keeping their share in the bride-price of his adopted daughter. Nor apparently did he offer the customary share to his own brother, but used the bride-price to take another, younger wife. Later Uber died. His junior wife married in levirate one of his brothers, Kwoco. The older widow married as her third husband a clansman of

her first husband, in a sort of postponed levirate, also without bride-price. Everybody seemed content until Kwoco, some years later, suddenly demanded his share in the bride-price of Uber's adopted daughter, which, he maintained, had been pocketed unlawfully by her mother or brother. The widow could easily prove that she had *nothing*; her son also denied having received a share in the disputed bride-price. He did not dispute the legality of Kwoco's claim, but merely said that if Uber had given him a share of his sister's bride-price, he would willingly satisfy Kwoco's claims; as he had been given nothing, he could also refund nothing. When the truth of this statement was doubted, he changed his defence, saying that he must keep his own property intact, for he might any day be called upon to refund his sister's bride-price (e.g. if she died or remained childless); if he now gave away what he had, who would satisfy the claims of his brothers-in-law? The legal position appeared most confused to the people themselves and to the chief who heard the case. All the latter could suggest was a compromise—a small gift to be paid to Kwoco by the son of the widow. An interesting sidelight is thrown on the case by the fact that Kwoco brought forward his claim only after he had quarrelled, for some reason unconnected with the bride-price issue, with the young man and his family; he undoubtedly utilized the obscure legal position to satisfy his vindictiveness.

The multitude of financial claims and counter-claims entailed in widowhood seem to emphasize, even more strongly than marriage as such, the purely economic aspect of bride-price. The motives of gain and even greed undoubtedly appear: the case just described is a clear instance. Yet the purely economic motives are incidental. Let me repeat that the bride-price is essentially a 'focus of kinship relations.' The financial transactions become terms of reference for social relationships. The people 'think' in these terms of reference: a particular kinship relation is, to them, most convincingly expressed and summarized in terms of bride-price rights and obligations—the right to share to such-and-such an extent in the bride-price, and the obligation to contribute to or to supply a bride-price or a bride-price refund.

The formula, 'children go with the bride-price', for example, stands for the whole set of rights and obligations implied in adoption—physical care, education, moral and economic responsibility. It is inevitable that these relationships should be expressed most forcibly (through the medium of bride-price payments) in the event of widowhood, i.e. at that reorientation of relationships which must follow upon the death of a husband or wife, a father or mother.

Regarded from this angle, the kinship system of Otoro appears as the simpler and more straightforward system. Relationships in Heiban are both more complex and unpredictable. In a sense, they are more uncertain, allowing for too many contingencies—an uncertainty which is, ultimately, the result of that primary 'uncertainty' involved in the 'incomplete adoption' of a wife into her husband's clan.

Divorce

The possibility of a legally valid dissolution of marriage formed part already of the traditional marriage system, although it was not then pronounced or backed by any official tribal authority. Even in Otoro, where an indigenous chieftainship has existed for several generations, divorce was exclusively a kinship matter, being negotiated and settled by the families concerned. No stigma attaches to divorce, not even if it is the result of open adultery. The marriage is dissolved by a total refund of the bride-price to the ex-husband. This refund should be paid over in one, though the original bride-price may have been paid over a certain period and in several instalments. The father and brothers of the woman are, in theory, responsible for the refund; in practice it would mostly be paid by the 'co-respondent' and future husband, though, to keep up appearances, the bride-price should reach (it does not always) the ex-husband through his former father-in-law. As a rule, no deductions are admitted, except in the (naturally rare) case of a middle-aged *divorcée*. Unlike widowhood, divorce allows no latitude with regard to the children. Until the bride-price has been handed over, all children borne by the woman belong to the man who is still her legal husband.

There are, then, strictly speaking, no illegitimate children. I have been told in Otoro that a violent-tempered husband, discovering that his wife has deceived him, might, in his anger, drive her out of his house and refuse to father the misbegotten child. But I have discovered no concrete instance of this. On the contrary, the evidence tends to show that there is no discrimination against illegitimate children—save the occasional abuse, born of momentary irritation: 'You can do this with your own father, but not in my house!'—and no attempt at vicarious revenge. I discovered only one instance of a man giving up his (legitimate) children when divorcing his wife. She had been an inveterate thief and had caused endless trouble to her husband, who was expected to make good all her thefts. Eventually his patience gave out. He sent her and her two children back to her people, demanding his bride-price back, and refusing to have anything further to do with either mother or children. The bride-price was returned to him—in full—the children remained with their mother-brother, and the woman eventually married again.

However, this seems an exceptional case. Normally the kleptomaniac leanings of a wife are not considered a ground for divorce; the husband would only claim a few goats from his father-in-law to reimburse himself for the various compensations he had to pay. But a husband would send a wife back to her people and demand divorce if she is a thoroughly 'bad' woman with whom one cannot live in peace, an incorrigible adulteress, if she suffers from leprosy, or if the husband has reason to suspect her of witchcraft. An occasional adultery committed by a wife who is otherwise content to stay with her husband is never made a ground for divorce. But, whatever the reasons, the husband will decide to divorce his wife only if he can be sure either that her father or brothers are

able to refund the bride-price or that she would find another husband from whom the bride-price could then be recovered. If neither is very likely, the husband would argue that he might just as well keep the wife.

It is altogether rare for the men to take the initiative in divorce. It is usually the woman who plays the active part, provoking divorce by simply deserting the husband. Again, desertion by the husband is rare. Moreover, if it happens it is treated, not according to the general rules of divorce, but as though the husband had died. If a husband left his wife or remained, for unknown reasons, absent from his home for a long period, his relatives would try to induce him to return to his wife. If his whereabouts are unknown and he had been absent for over three years, the marriage will be considered dissolved as by death, and the woman will remarry according to the rules of widowhood. Modern conditions have somewhat added to the importance of this form of separation. Men who leave their hill (specially in Heiban) to seek work in the large towns may sometimes disappear for years from the orbit of their families. Criminals who serve a long prison sentence abroad also 'desert', in this sense, their wives or brides, whom they had to leave behind. There was the case of a murderer who returned to Heiban after fifteen years in Port Sudan Prison to find all his three wives married—one in ordinary marriage, and two in levirate, one of them to his younger brother. The returned husband was entitled to claim these two wives back or, alternatively, to demand bride-price for them from their husbands; actually, he took only one of them back, but he was very angry with his brother: 'Why', he said, 'I am not yet dead.' His brother thought this anger unreasonable.

A wife will desert her husband (and eventually divorce him) for the following reasons: because he is impotent; because he suffers from an incurable disease (above all, leprosy); because he beat her more than even the accommodating Nuba code allows; or simply because she fell in love with another man and, as she would put it, 'no longer loves her husband'. In the first, second, and third case the wife will as a rule return to her parents. The legal issue being fairly clear, the families concerned will presently proceed with the divorce. If the desertion was the result (and expression) of a change in the affections of the woman, she will go straight to her lover's house and there await further developments. The desertion in itself is not so much a ground for divorce as the accepted challenge and first step towards divorce. The wife's father and husband might not simply accept the accomplished fact; more often they would do their best, in their various ways, to induce the run-away wife to resume marital relations: the father, by using persuasion or (formerly) the stronger argument of flogging his daughter into obedience; the husband, by fighting his rival and attempting to win back his wife in this fashion. The eagerness of the girl's father to give his son-in-law his moral support varies; it depends, in particular, on whom he has more reason to fear, his

son-in-law or his daughter's paramour. But, as some informants hold, only stupid men will think at all of interfering; a wise father-in-law lets the two rivals fight it out.

If desertion by the wife represents the accepted first move in the divorce action, the fight over the woman is (or used to be) the accepted response. In Heiban the jealous husband may ambush and attack his rival single-handed or he may, like his Otoro brother, collect his relatives and friends and seek out his rival, either in the latter's house or at some public gathering. The paramour, too, will have made his preparations and will have surrounded himself with helpers. In Heiban one fights with knives, axes, guns—whatever weapon one has; the fight is violent and brutal, and often ends in death. In Otoro one fights with sticks and shields, and the group duel, fought in the spirit of an affair of honour, never leads to killing; the group which is driven from the field acknowledges defeat. In Heiban, however, the woman is still free to choose, whatever the outcome of the combat. In Otoro the victor in the fight also wins the woman; public opinion would never countenance a different solution. If the husband regained his wife, she will at once return to his house; if it was her lover who remained victorious, she would anoint herself with oil (as she did when she was first married), and go to her parent's house, alone, in the evening following the fight. The people who would meet her on the way now know that everything has been settled. The woman will stay in her parents' house until the exchange of bride-price has been completed and she is free to remarry in all form. However, the strength of the two rivals and the number of helpers they can command may be so unequal that a combat is out of the question. A weak husband could never hope to wrest his wife from her lover, and a weak paramour never to keep her. The dispute then becomes a 'civil' case, dealt with by the old men of the two groups. If the woman can be persuaded to return to her husband, the paramour would be made to pay one to five goats to the husband; if she refuses—as she would if her lover is the stronger of the two—the marriage is dissolved, and the husband must be content with recovering the bride-price.

Of the different kinds of divorce we need consider only divorce on the grounds of a change in the affections of the wife, which represents both the most frequent and, to us, the most interesting variety. To-day divorce—on whatever grounds—has become the concern of the Native Courts. The self-help of the husband is—at least in theory—ruled out. This change has done more than merely led an angry contest into the more pacific channel of a divorce suit. It has also widened the scope of divorce. In the original legal conception of divorce the point whether the marriage was consummated or not was irrelevant. Not only were seduction and adultery proper treated alike (which we should have expected), but a bride who refused to marry her betrothed was regarded as in no way different from a wife who left her husband for her lover. And this was, in fact, the case; the 'change of affection' was invariably

an 'alienation of affection'.[1] A girl who came to dislike her future husband had no hope of escaping the hated marriage unless she could present her bridegroom and family with the necessary *fait accompli* by running away to another man—a man ready to fight for her. Merely platonic remonstrations would have been useless. Now the modern court represents just that impartial authority to which such 'platonic' pleas can be addressed. In Heiban, especially, young girls are increasingly appealing to the Native Court for the release from a hated engagement. The very appearance of this new, impartial forum must have invited this reaction against existing maladjustments, such as the marriage of young girls to old men whom they hardly know or who never bothered to win their favour.[2] The girl who pleads a 'change of affection' is not at once believed. The old suspicion of a paramour in the offing is still alive. Not until she has satisfied the court that hers is a genuine case of 'change of affection' will divorce be granted.

Or rather, granted without further difficulty. Divorce is not withheld in the case of real adultery, seduction, or alienation of affection; but it must follow upon the punishment of the woman or girl and her paramour. The Native Court punishes adultery and alienation of affection by fining the paramour, and often also the woman, up to £4, or, alternatively, sending them to prison for three to four months. When the culprits have paid the fine or served the prison sentence the legal obstacle to divorce and remarriage is removed. We see that the court action has been accepted as the exact modern equivalent of the traditional fight over the woman. Like the latter, the fine or prison sentence constitutes the necessary qualification for divorce and remarriage. Yet in the fight over the woman a number of motives was combined: the desire for revenge, the satisfaction of honour, the exhilaration of the contest, and the hope of winning back one's wife or bride. The emphasis lay on the last motive. Even in Heiban, where the woman could still make her decision irrespective of the outcome of the duel, the very fight, the way in which the rivals acquitted themselves in her eyes, would often prove the strongest moral argument. This emphasis, it seems, has shifted. The husband's honour and vindictiveness is satisfied by the punishment which the culprits receive at the hands of the court. But the only 'moral' argument that might sway the woman or her lover is the threat of the fine and prison sentence. The fine represents, in reality, nothing but a licence fee paid for remarriage. The argument of manly virtue, the contest of rivals, have given way to a financial qualification.

[1] The people use the word *kugeju*, which means to 'persuade' or 'entice' one to do something evil.

[2] This new independent spirit of young girls has also been consciously fostered by the mission in Heiban, which has largely concentrated on girl's education. Under the influence of the mission, girls are revising their conception of ideal husbands; they now look for likely converts to Christianity, for husbands prepared to be monogamous in a polygamous society, and to turn teetotallers in a community where beer-drinking is an institution.

Inheritance

The rules of widowhood and adoption contain already the essential elements of the law of inheritance. More clear-cut than the former, the rules of inheritance appear as an unqualified expression of patrilineal kinship alignment.

At the death of a family head, his adult (real) sons inherit his whole property—house, land, grain, livestock, and (in Otoro) personal belongings like spears, knives, a gun, ornaments—dividing it among themselves according to age and need. The younger, unmarried sons, who have not yet a house or land of their own and have still to find their bride-price, will receive the largest share of the livestock and personal property, and will also take over the land and sometimes, in due course, the house. If the widow stays alone in the house, possibly with small children, a plot of land and some of the grain stocked in the house will be allotted to her; the land remains hers until she remarries. If any bride-price payments were outstanding at the time of the death, one of the brothers of the deceased takes them over and makes himself responsible for the customary redistribution among the various relatives; if the deceased had started paying a bride-price for himself before he died, his brother may either continue the payments and marry the bride-widow, or, cancelling the agreement, may demand the refund of the amount already paid.

If the deceased left only small children, his brother who would adopt them and possibly marry the widow in levirate will act as trustee of the heirs. He may also take over the house until the sons come of age. But this last rule is not rigid; neither in Otoro nor in Heiban is a house regarded as a very valuable property; often it is abandoned altogether when the widow leaves it to marry again. The foster-father will use the grain left in the granaries for the family of the deceased; he will tend his land and perform the various agricultural rites till the harvest is brought in, after which the land will be left fallow until the sons have grown up and can cultivate it themselves. The brother of the deceased also keeps the livestock until the sons have reached marriageable age and need it for their bride-price. He will then return, not only the herd which he had taken over, but also all animals born since. He can, on the other hand, deduct the animals which he killed at sacrifices or other ritual occasions on behalf of the adopted children (e.g. sacrifices performed in case of illness, agricultural rites, &c.). He may not use the animals for himself—not even 'borrow' them—save with the permission of the sons and their mother. Whether or not he will also deduct animals which died depends on his wealth and generosity. This return of the livestock property which he kept in trust does not relieve the foster-father of his duty to contribute himself to the bride-price of his brother-sons. The personal belongings of his deceased brother he may keep, although he will as a rule return the spears to the boys when they come of age. This is the Otoro rule. In Heiban the personal property of the deceased must

go to brothers, and never to sons—whether they are boys or adults. If a son needs a knife or a spear, his foster-father will give him one of his own. Guns (an altogether new type of property) are an exception; so are the sacrificial spears, which are a family property rather than a personal property; both go to the eldest son. Finally, if the deceased left no sons, the property is divided among his brothers; if there are no surviving brothers, either real or classificatory, brother-sons or, occasionally, sister-sons, may step into the inheritance.

The property of women that can be inherited is small. Her household utensils and personal belongings (so far as they are not buried with her or placed on her grave) go to her daughters or—failing daughters—sisters. Axes and spades are taken by the husband. The small livestock property of the Heiban women, a few pigs, is inherited by her children, sons and daughters, or, if she had no children, by her husband. In this case the animals will be deducted from the refund of the bride-price which he can claim on account of her barrenness.

The rules of inheritance show a certain latitude with regard to the appointment of 'brothers' as main heirs and trustees. They allow for the varying aptitude or readiness of brothers to undertake these tasks: one brother may be too young, and another too old; others, again, may be disqualified because of indifferent health or a difficult temper, or because they already have a large family to look after. The rules also allow for the individual preference of the widow if she agrees to marry in levirate. The large number of theoretical candidates will thus be narrowed down to one or two. These and similar negotiations over inheritance are settled in discussions of the older men of the kindred. The fluid rules seem to prevent effectively serious dissensions and disputes (except, in Heiban, over the complicated issue of bride-price payments and refunds). There is no 'last will and testament', and the deceased himself has no means of influencing the decision by appointing a favourite son or brother as the sole or main heir to the exclusion of other equally qualified relations.

We note one essential difference in the law of inheritance of the two tribes—namely, the Heiban rule which forbids sons to inherit the personal belongings of their father. This rule appears to have primarily a magic significance. The personal property of the deceased must be ritually purified before it can be taken over by his brothers. It is kept for one month in the house of the mother (real or classificatory) of the deceased until, after the funerary rite performed thirty days after the death, it is taken outside, sprinkled with the blood of an animal sacrificed on this occasion, then washed with water, and finally distributed among the heirs. The superstitious fear which necessitates this purification rite seems to be responsible also for the exclusion of sons from the inheritance of personal belongings. The dangerous magic inherent in objects which had been worn or handled by the dead can be neutralized in the case of brothers, but not, it seems, in the case of sons; for, having lived in much

closer personal contact with the deceased, having themselves probably daily handled these spears, knives, or ornaments, they must be more susceptible to the taint of death. This fits well into the picture of the religious beliefs of Heiban, in which the fear of the dead is indeed a dominant feature.

CHAPTER V

HEIBAN AND OTORO
(*continued*)

Adolescence and Adulthood

WITH the discussion of adolescence we step outside the grouping ruled by kinship and descent, into the sphere of new forms of social organization. The treatment of adolescence, especially male adolescence, in the two tribes shows marked differences—more marked than in any other domain of life hitherto discussed. In Heiban adolescence appears as a continuous and, in a sense, unregulated growth in which the various steps and phases are hardly marked. In Otoro, adolescence is fitted into a rigid framework of age-grades, which lead the adolescent, step by step, from early youth to adulthood, and partly even beyond, to the highest grade of mature age. Let me begin with female adolescence, with regard to which the two tribes show closely similar customs.

Till they are ten or eleven, the daily life of boys and girls shows little difference. They eat together and sleep together in the same hut, though in their work they will already follow the different courses typical of their sex: girls helping their mothers to fetch water and firewood or cook meals, and boys beginning to herd goats and sheep. With the onset of puberty—the filling out of the girls' breasts and the growing of the pubic hairs of the boys—their ways diverge. But first they undergo the same mutilation, the breaking out of the lower front teeth—four in Heiban, two (of boys) or four (of girls) in Otoro. The people can produce no explanation for this custom except such obvious rationalizations as these: 'If the child fell ill, it would now be possible to force food through the clenched teeth.' Or: 'The children will eat in measure once they lose their front teeth; unless this is done, they would simply eat their father poor.' Or, finally: 'Without their front teeth, they will grow faster.'

About this time girls cease to sleep in the parental home and spend their nights in the girls' huts, called *luru* in Heiban and *kur* in Otoro. They spend their days as before, in their parents' house or on the farms, with their parents; they also eat at home—though now separate from their brothers. The girls themselves decide when they are to start sleeping in the *kur*. These girls' huts are single huts, standing by themselves; in Otoro they are built specially for this purpose; in Heiban they are huts of old widows living alone. The girls have their first menstruation when already living in the *kur* (an event marked by no special rite or avoidance); they will become engaged during that time, and there they will receive the visits of their lovers or fiancés. The prospect of receiving these visits and indulging in the sexual play which forms part of courtship is indeed

the acknowledged reason for this segregation of the girls. Shame forbids that girls should receive their lovers in their parents' house, while in the *kur* they are free from all supervision—the old woman in Heiban cares nothing about what happens in her hut. Thus secrecy and public approval of a delicate matter are agreeably combined. You find these huts in every locality; there may be one or more, according to the number of girls of that age.[1] Five to eight girls occupy one hut; neither they nor their lovers seem to mind this lack of privacy.

With marriage and motherhood, the life of women finds its final pattern; the years that follow bring no more changes either of status or of mode of life.

The life of the young men in Heiban between puberty and marriage runs an equally smooth and uneventful course, with no rites or ceremonials to mark the various stages of maturity and no tribal sports or similar tests of manhood. There is only one, superficial, change of status during this period, the taking of a second, adult, name. This step is neither obligatory nor conditional upon special rules of procedure (as it is in Otoro). The young man will simply choose a name he fancies, mostly that of another man whom he admires, and inform his friends and relations that he would henceforth be known by this new second name.

One further change of status is open to adult men. It is achieved by performing the *nirowa* ceremony, of which we have spoken in a previous chapter. This big ceremony and feast centres round the killing (with spears) of the fattened-up bulls which are an emblem of wealth in this tribe. A man desirous of displaying his wealth and enhancing his prestige may perform as many *nirowa* ceremonies as he can afford. He will as a rule be forty or fifty when he performs his first (and possibly only) *nirowa*. Now he becomes generally acknowledged as an important member of the group, a man whose name carries weight, though in no way a leader of the community. The qualifications for this rise in status are almost entirely economic. The one act that might reflect some other virtue besides, the spearing of the bulls, is in reality a very simple affair. The bull is heavy and lazy, and half-blind after his long confinement. Women and boys chase him across the bush and towards the houses where the festive crowd is assembled, until the tired beast lets itself be driven into a position in which it offers an easy and quite harmless target. Several men, brothers and brother-sons of the man performing the *nirowa*, throw their spears at the animal, and the protagonist himself need not take part in the spearing at all. Much more important than this display of questionable heroics is the augury of the way in which the bull finally dies. If he collapses with his head pointing in the ritual direction of the clan to which the man performing the ceremony belongs—and the

[1] In Heiban the girls' huts are partly disappearing, for there are too few girls left, most of them being inmates of the mission school. Heiban informants even go so far as to say: 'We don't need the *luru* now; the mission is our *luru*.' Needless to say, the young men are not allowed to push this simile too far, though they have made brave attempts.

crowd of onlookers will do its best to shoo and scare the beast into falling this way and not that—it means prosperity, health, and fertility of the women. The ritual through which the individual gains prestige is thus, ultimately, an occasion for the whole clan and community to ascertain and ensure a prosperous future.

We turn to male adolescence in Otoro. At puberty the boys join the age-grade groups of their village. Hitherto known as *nyare*, 'boys', they will now bear the name of the first age-grade, *dongoro*. The age-grades themselves and all activities linked with them are known as *normoco*. The Otoro age-grade system comprises the following five grades (the figures in brackets refer to the approximate age of the age-grade members):

1. *dongoro* (11–14).
2. *kamju* (14–17).
3. *babo no nyare* (lit. 'father of the boys'; 17–20).
4. *kamju kokoron* ('old *kamju*', 20–23).
5. *kurninya* (lit. 'grandfather', 23–26).

We note that two grades bear kinship names, 'father' and 'grandfather'. The relationship between the different age-grades appears, in fact, modelled on kinship relationship. Leaving out the two *kamju* grades, we have three grades regarded as standing in the same relationship as sons, fathers, and grandfathers: grade 1 calls grade 3 'father', and grade 1 and 5 call each other *kurneri*, i.e. by the classificatory term meaning both grandfather and grandson. The 'father' grade implies the typical paternal attitude of a stern instructor and disciplinarian, while the 'grandfather' grade plays the same role as in real life, i.e. that of a benevolent friend and helper. The two *kamju* grades stand outside the metaphoric kinship scheme.

The age-grades are compulsory and inclusive. Every boy who has reached the appropriate age joins as a matter of course, not excluding boys who are physically deformed or backward. Blindness, leprosy, and lunacy are the only grounds for exemption. It is the duty of the 'father' grade to collect the novices at the time of the periodical promotion festivities and to form them into a first age-grade group. Each age-grade runs three years, after which time its members are corporately promoted to the next higher grade. Although competitive enterprise figures prominently in the Otoro grades, the promotion from grade to grade is non-competitive and does not serve as a test for the weeding-out of the failures or backward. Those who do well in the age-grades, in the games, sports, and other tasks, are enabled to gather in public praise. Those who do badly, even the physically unfit or mentally backward, may yet remain in their age-group. Yet if they are not singled out for humiliation, neither are they shown sympathy: for, forced into one class with those whom they cannot possibly equal, they are never allowed to forget their own inadequacy.

The triennial promotion is marked by a great tribal festivity, centring

round the ceremonial elevation of the novice grade, *dongoro*, to the second grade, *kamju*. This feast is called *najo*, or 'limestone', after the white lime with which the new-baked *kamju* paint their bodies. The climax of the feast is a race of the novices to the place where the white limestone is found (some ten miles from Otoro) and back again to their hill, with the freshly dug, treasured lime in their hands.

The elevation to *kamju* rank means, in the hierarchy of the age-grades, the end of a period of servile obedience and 'fagging', often enforced by corporal punishment, and the attainment of the coveted position of proud, swaggering seniors. The further promotion to *babo no nyare* brings the responsibility of looking after (and the privilege of lording it over) the novice ranks. But the liberties involved in this change of status are both rigidly circumscribed and infused with a sense of (restrained) retaliation. There is a strict reversal of positions: the senior boy may administer to his juniors only as many beatings as he himself received when a humble *dongoro*. In this carefully cultivated revenge attitude, youth gains a foretaste of a principle which will govern adult life—namely, the precise retaliation involved in the tribal rules of blood feud (see p. 152). Finally 'old' *kamju* and *kurninya*, on the top of the rank scale, play the part of slightly aloof, benevolent onlookers and intermediaries between the age-grades and the adult community. In general social life, the elevation of *dongoro* to *kamju* coincides with the acceptance of the boy as a regular fellow worker on his father's land and the attainment of marriageable (i.e. betrothal) age. The subsequent promotions imply no parallel changes in social status. Marriage itself—the actual consummation—is not reflected in the age-grade system. A *babo no nyare* may or may not be married; an 'old' *kamju* will mostly be married and may already have children.[1]

The age-grades are recruited from a number of neighbouring villages in the same hill community. Often, as we shall see, the hill community is divided for this purpose in two halves, each possessing its own age-grade groups. If the population of this group of villages grows too large, their age-grade groups may split into two new, independent organizations. The natural reduction in numbers (through death) in the higher grades never leads to a merging of age-grade groups which started as separate organizations. Special huts belonging to the *dongoro* and *kamju* grades represent the social centres of the local age grades. Like the girls' huts, these huts are known as *kur*, and here the boys meet from time to time, hold their parties, store the property of the age-grades (sticks, ornaments, food, and beer), and make the preparations for the important age-grade activities, utilitarian or ceremonial. The senior grades have no separate huts, but are the guests of *dongoro* and *kamju*. At the age-grade feasts

[1] It is clear that in one family, i.e. among the young men of one family, different age-grades may be found represented at any given time. To give an example: among the eight sons of a certain Otoro man I found (in 1939) two *kamju*, one 'old' *kamju*, one *babo*, and one *kurninya*; the remaining three sons had already passed through all ranks.

it is the duty of the *dongoro* to produce beer (obtained from their mothers) and food, and serve it to their seniors. Young boys who are shortly to join the age grades as novices will similarly cook for and serve the *dongoro*, who in turn initiate their prospective successors into that important practice of adulthood—beer-drinking. Whenever they go out, the age-grade fellows will appear in the typical age-grade dress symbolic of the grade to which they belong; the *dongoro* wears a narrow belt of dried palm leaves; the *kamju* a broad belt; the *babo* a fringed grass belt. Nor are the novices ever really outside the age-grade discipline. Whenever a *babo* or *kamju* meet a *dongoro*—on the farms, on the road, even at dances or festivities—they will expect him to do little services for them, like carrying their loads, and a *babo* would at the slightest provocation (and often without it) use his prerogative of flogging his junior. Age-grade discipline, however, stops at the house and does not replace the domestic discipline enforced by fathers.

The 'utilitarian' age-grade activities take the form of group work on the farms of the parents or parents-in-law of an age-grade fellow or on the land of some other man who 'hires' his local age-grade for a payment of a goat or pig. The animal becomes age-grade property, and is kept in the house of one of the fellows until it is needed for an age-grade ceremony. The *dongoro* do the actual farm work, being supervised (as they are only now learning to farm) and spurred to action by their taskmaster, the *babo*. The *kamju* do no work, but swagger about, try a dance step or two, and wait for the next item on the programme, the wrestling match (*lebolo*), which always takes place on these occasions. The senior grades wrestle first; later the *dongoro* join in the wrestling—another activity in which they are novices—fighting with one another and umpired by their *babo* prefects. A *dongoro* who dares to challenge a senior-grade boy is encouraged and acclaimed by his age mates and seniors alike, and his pluck is applauded even if he is thrown by his older and more experienced opponent.

In the dry season there are more wrestling matches, now arranged for their own sake. In these fights the *dongoro* show their growing skill, and *kamju* and *babo* fight for the palms of the Otoro wrestlers—a sheepskin which the victorious wrestler wears round his neck at all meetings of the young men. At home he keeps it on a high pole outside the huts, for everyone to see. He will keep the trophy until it is wrested from him by another, stronger fighter. A great wrestler acquires a fame which soon spreads to other communities and hills, and his age-mates and the girls will compose songs about him and his feats of strength. The following song, describing the 'rise and decline' of an anonymous wrestler, is a typical example.

You are strong. You can throw ten men. But some time ago you weakened. You threw two men only, or you were sitting idle. Your cattle are strong and give plenty of milk. You have great strength. But

now you dress up, you go to the village to be with the girls (instead of fighting). Thus you can no longer throw ten men. You throw only three, or sit idle. Formerly, when Kobane was here (a famous wrestler in his day), he was stronger than you all.

Then there are the many dances of young men and girls which form an essential element of social life in the dry season. Certain of these dances (called *tirú*) are turned into age-grade activities. *Dongoro* and *babo* wear their war paint—the former have their whole body painted white, the latter wear white-painted stockings. Some of the *kamju* carry switches cut from trees, others supply the band, two or three gourd trumpets and a cow's horn.[1] *Dongoro* amd *babo* form a ring and dance round the *kamju*, who have stepped inside the circle. As they move round, they are beaten by their seniors, *dongoro* by *kamju*, and *babo* by 'old' *kamju*. Girls dance with the boys, who sing the age-grade songs which they have made up. At sunset the dance breaks up, and the boys return to their *kur* to drink beer and eat corn gruel and curd.

Let me add a few words about the relation between boys' and girls' *kur*. The girls, too, form age-grade groups. They have three ranks, *dongoro*, *kamju*, and *babo* (marriage cutting short, in their case, the further age-grade career). They also have parties in their *kur*, with milk, food, and beer, which are timed so that boys' and girls' feasts should coincide. There are, of course, visits between the two *kur*, but otherwise there exist no regular links between male and female age-grade organization. The latter is, in fact, not taken seriously. It is regarded as a rather amusing and, incidentally, quite recent copy of the male organization. According to my informants, no one heard of a girls' *normoco* fifteen years ago.[2]

The two peaks of age-grade life are the triennial promotion ceremony and its sequel, the taking of adult names of the newly promoted *kamju*. I cannot attempt here to give more than a very abridged description of the long and complicated *najo* ceremony. It has a special master of ceremonies, an old man who holds the hereditary office of the 'Master of the *najo*' and lives invariably on the same hill as the chief of the tribe. It is for him to fix the date of the forthcoming celebration, which takes place early in the dry season.

The age-grade groups begin their preparations by storing grain and beer and collecting the animals received as payments for farm work during the three years, which they will need for the numerous gifts they will have to make to the old men and office-holders of their community. The first gifts, of beer and one goat, are presented to the

[1] The ordinary *tirú* is performed at night; the special age-grade *tirú* by day, and only twice in the three-year period of the age-grades, at the beginning and towards the end of the period. The name of the dance, *ti-rú*, imitates the monotonous interval which the gourd trumpets and horn produce.

[2] The girls' *normoco* betrays its character of a copy already in its nomenclature. The name 'father of the boys' seems a little out of place. But when I suggested to the girls that 'mother-of-the-girls' would be more suitable, they laughed and said: 'But this is not real language. This is *normoco* language.'

'Master of the *najo*' and to the local chief or sub-chief. The age-grade groups of two neighbouring communities combine for this purpose, one presenting the gift to the Master of Ceremonies and the other to the local chief. The former shares all the gifts he receives with the Paramount Chief of the tribe. From this day on till the end of the *najo*, the novices must observe certain food restrictions; they must not eat beans, groundnuts, and guinea-fowls. The age-grade groups in the chief's village are the first to get ready. They paint their shields white and ornament their sticks with strands of goat's hair and *tibeldi*-tree fibre. The *kamju* daub their body with red and white spots, dress their hair with ochre and oil, and tie bells round their waist. The *dongoro* and *babo* tie strips of sheepskin round legs and arms. The same day they make the round of all Otoro hills, running from village to village, and stopping at the various chiefs' houses to perform a short dance and beg the gift of a goat or pig. On the next day the age-grades of all the other villages follow suit. Food and beer is being prepared in every house. The fathers of *dongoro* shave the head of their boys; father and mother draw a fowl in the air round their heads—a common magic to ensure strength and health—and feed them well on this last night before the big race. The same evening all the various age-grade groups meet at Kyaure, at the foot of Chungur hill. The Master of Ceremonies, the chief and everyone who can walk, men and women, old and young, go down there as well. The race starts in the cool of the evening. Arrived at the limestone quarry, the boys wait for the Master of Ceremonies, who follows more slowly, together with a crowd of other people. He pushes his spear into the rock and breaks the first clod. This is the signal for the boys to rush at the stone. Each local group keeps together, but between them they fight and scramble, push each other away and even rob each other of the precious lumps. The *dongoro* must wait till their group captains think it safe for them to join in this rush. Younger and weaker boys or girls do not venture into the scuffle for fear of being trampled down or killed (this happened once), but wait for an elder brother or age-group fellow to procure the lime for them. The boys daub their temples, chests, and backs with white paint. Finally, when everyone has obtained his lump of lime, *dongoro* and *kamju* race each other home. It is a great thing for a *dongoro* to overtake his senior; he may take away his shield and his bells, and the unfortunate *kamju* will retire in ignominy for the rest of the festivities. Arrived in Kyaure, women, girls, and older men may rest. But there is no rest for *kamju* and *dongoro*: the former will want to show that they are not in the least tired, and the latter will, as usual, be spurred into activity by their seniors.

Young brides will massage the feet and legs of their fiancés with oil to take the tiredness from them. In return, they are given some of the limestone which the boys have brought back. Boys and girls paint themselves white (they will have to renew the coat of paint several times during the feast). There follow dancing, eating, and drinking, and

more dancing, all through the night and the following day. The *leitmotif* of the *najo*, the elevation of the *dongoro* to *kamju* rank, is again and again thrown into relief. At one time during the feast the *dongoro* take away the shields of the *kamju* to show that 'they are no longer afraid of them'. Later the *dongoro* attack and pursue the *babo no nyare*, their ex-prefects, and rob them of their decorated sticks. Finally, shortly before the gathering breaks up, the *kamju* feign an attack on the *dongoro*—a last attempt, as it were, to defend their already lost position. The *kamju* have been given back their shields, and now they beat the novices with branches of trees and chase them towards the hill, while the *dongoro* seek protection behind the shields of *babo no nyare* and *kurninya*. Thus pursued and protected, they reach the hill and the safety of their *kur*. Here the pursuit ends, and with it the *najo* itself.

But before that a certain ritual has taken place down in the valley which, for a moment, lifted the age-grade ceremony on to a wider plane. The Master of Ceremonies, together with another man called *Ltmdu*,[1] have dug a hole in the ground, and all the people (no longer arranged according to age-groups) form a wide circle around it, facing the hole. They keep absolute silence. The two officiants of the rite walk slowly round the outside of the circle, carrying the branch of a thorny shrub. Through a gap in the circle they walk towards the hole; there they bury the branch, weighing it down with a big stone. Not until this is done may the people talk or sing again. This magic rite is believed to keep hunger and disease from the tribe during the coming three years.

The *kamju* have left their shields and sticks finally in the *kur* of their juniors and retired to their own *kur*. For some time to come the *dongoro* will still produce food and beer for their seniors. These food tributes which the *kamju* will exact from the *dongoro* must correspond in amount exactly to the tributes which the *kamju* had to produce for their seniors when they were *dongoro*. But now the *dongoro* are already called *kamju*, though not until a month later will they stop renewing the white paint on their bodies, and dress up in *kamju* fashion: a monkey tooth through the lobe of the ear, an iron ring through the nose, and a belt of lizard-skins round the waist; this belt they keep on till it wears out, when they exchange it for their everyday wear, the broad palm-leaf belt. At the end of the month (during which they sleep in the *kur*) they vacate their *kur* and take over the *kur* of the *kamju* grade.

The ex-*kamju*, having been promoted *babo no nyare*, in the meantime collect new boys who are to be the *dongoro* of the next age-grade period. They do it by persuasion and, occasionally, by force. The new boys are invited to a meal in the *kur*, which seals their acceptance as novices. 'Now you can no longer leave us', their seniors explain to them, 'for you have eaten *dongoro* food.'

[1] Ltmdu is actually the name of a Tira clan which possesses this particular magic. The Otoro use the clan name as a name for this ritual office, which is always held by an Otoro-Tira of that clan. We shall presently understand the connexion of the Tira with the Otoro *najo*.

The new *kamju* will now think about taking a second, adult name. As a rule he will adopt the name of some adult who was known as a great wrestler in his youth. He must be prepared to fight the older man for the privilege of bearing his name. If the *kamju* is victorious (which he might well be, considering his youth and state of training), he simply adds the new name to his birth name. If he is thrown, he can either try his luck against a less formidable opponent or 'buy' the other man's name with the gift of a fowl or spear.[1]

The *kamju* cannot use his new name until he has undergone a final rite and test. All the age-grades and many old men besides meet at the *kamju kur*. The new-fledged *kamju* are all huddled together inside, and their former *babo* prefects stand watch at the door, twigs of trees in their hands. The *kamju* file out one by one. The *babo* ask them: 'What is your name?' As each one answers he receives a lash across chest or shoulders. The old men then acclaim him by his new name. The lashes give good measure, and the *kamju* must walk slowly to show that they are not afraid. This rite of name-taking has no fixed time and is not performed for the whole tribe together. It takes place whenever the local *kamju* grade has collected the considerable store of food and beer which it must offer on this occasion to the senior grades and to the old men of the village.[2]

The age-grade system throws into relief two distinct qualifications of manhood: prowess in farming and animal husbandry, and individual courage and fighting spirit. Both will have to be proved throughout adult life. The former in the ordinary tasks of livelihood, and the latter in the raids and tribal fights which are (or were) no less an ingredient of Otoro life.

But social rise does not stop with the age-grades. And these same two attributes of Otoro manhood are also embodied in the steps on the scale of status and prestige which are open to adults. Economic achievement is emphasized in the *narma* ritual—the exact counterpart to the Heiban *nirowa*; manly valour in the *nwole*—the cicatrization ritual, which entails the elevation from the position of an ordinary citizen to that of a *dermoco*, or 'big man' of the community. The two rites have nothing to do with each other; they reflect altogether different types of prestige, and are, to some extent, alternatives. The same man may perform both, or he may prefer one to the other. Both are equally expensive—the *nwole*, too, involves the killing of bulls and the killing

[1] The boys are, besides, given playful 'wrestling names' by their girl admirers, either the names of famous wrestling champions of the past or symbolic names such as (to-day) the names of coins: for, like coins, the wrestlers are 'unbreakable'.

[2] Here are a few figures. During the *ŋajo* itself a certain *dongoro* group had to supply four pigs, one he-goat, one basket each of simsim and groundnuts, one big pot of corn gruel, one big pot of sour milk, and seven pots of beer. For the name-taking ritual, one big basket each of groundnuts, simsim, and maize, one big pot of sour milk, one big pot of corn gruel, and seven pots of beer. The milk is from the goats or cows in the cattle camps; the simsim, groundnuts, and maize are partly from the cattle camp farms and partly contributed by the parents of the boys.

and giving away of numerous goats.[1] But the cicatrization is, in addition, a real test of courage and endurance. I have been told of a man who was wealthy enough to perform four times the *narma* rite, but who was afraid to undergo the *nwole*. On the other hand, I have met a man whose resources were exhausted half-way through the *nwole* proceedings, and who had to leave the final act till the coming year.

Economically, the man who becomes a *dermoco* may well be finished. He has little chance of amassing at his age another fortune like the one he spent. But there is no need for it. With the appointment to this highest status, the man's career has come to an end: he has done his work, he has shown himself a man; now he can sit back and rest, and reap the benefits of his fame. He will not even feel the economic strain. Whenever a feast of any kind is celebrated in the village, the *dermoco* will be invited or offered a share of meat and beer before all others. In the words of an informant: 'Till you become a *dermoco*, you are known only to your family, a few neighbours and friends. Once you are a *dermoco*, you become known to your whole clan and to the whole hill.' I could test the truth of this statement: every person in Chungur, for example, could enumerate without hesitation the names of the eighteen local *dermoco*.

One becomes a *dermoco* when one is forty to fifty—that is, at an age when a man might well take another wife. From the economic point of view, this appears, in fact, as another alternative to the *nwole*, the costs of which are roughly the same as the bride-price for a young wife. But a large number of the *dermoco* whom I have met had only two wives or even one wife. Clearly, though taking another wife might be an attractive thought from one point of view, it cannot satisfy the desire which prompts a man to undergo the cicatrization—to acquire prestige and make a name for himself.

The association of cicatrization with a test of manhood is emphasized in various ways. The very cicatrization pattern is thought of as a symbol of manly virtues. Men who killed an enemy in a fight are entitled to have a small pattern of scars (four to seven rows) cicatrized on their backs. Successful hunters who killed a leopard, kudu, or ibex may wear a similar scar pattern on their upper arms. During the *nwole* feast the young men perform a special dance in which only those who have killed an enemy may take part, displaying symbolic trophies which proclaim their feats—a shield or spear for every man they killed, and a gourd for every woman. Among the many guests who come to witness the ceremony you will see bands of men carrying flags of various colours; the flag is a modern emblem, adopted from the Arabs, which has replaced the old symbol of ostrich feathers tied to a long stick; but its meaning is the same—only men who have killed an enemy may rally under it.

[1] In a concrete case the *nwole* involved the following expenditure: twelve goats, two rams, and two bulls (not counting grain for food and beer); in another case the expenditure was three bulls and thirty-two goats.

The operation itself is no mean feat of endurance. It starts early in the morning (after a short magic rite performed by the man's family to 'make his body strong') and goes on without break till it is finished in the afternoon. The man, naked, an axe, knife and a few sticks in one hand, a horse-hair fly switch in the other, sits under a makeshift sunshade. The woman expert who performs the operation—called *barto*—squats in front of him. She lifts the skin with a thorn and cuts into it with a sharp knife. Soon long rows of tiny parallel scars run down the man's back and chest, thighs and arms. The man's sister or mother sits close to him to give him courage. Women and girls crowd around him, dancing, singing and yelling. The man has eaten and drunk nothing since the morning, and may not drink even a drop of water till the evening. The blood is streaming down his body, but he must keep himself straight, he must sing with the women or at least move his lips as if he were singing, and not betray by the slightest sign that he is feeling pain or discomfort, lest he degrade himself before the crowd of onlookers. When the operation is finished oil is rubbed into the scars. Then the man is led down into the valley to a near-by stream, the whole crowd following him to watch the final scene. Women throw water over his smarting scars and two old *dermoco* duck their new colleague. Soon afterwards the people disperse, and the exhausted protagonist is allowed to go home and rest.

The operation represents the climax of a long series of preliminary rites and sacrifices, which we need not describe in detail. A first beer feast in the house of the *dermoco*-to-be, which announces to the community that, say, Mondo is undergoing the cicatrization this year, is followed a few days later by the sacrifice of a goat. A number of skin bracelets (*lortede*) are cut from the legs of the animal; the skin from the right foreleg is tied round the right wrist of our hero, Mondo; the skin from the right hindleg will be presented later to the *barto* (the woman 'surgeon'), and the skin from the left legs is cut into a number of bracelets, each for one of the other men who are being cicatrized the same year, and who will always attend each other's ceremonies. The blood of the animal, mixed with water, is sprinkled over the crowd of guests. Mondo is handed the first emblem of his new status, the horse-hair fly switch. The guests drink beer, eat, sing, and dance. The *dermoco*-to-be who are present dance a dance of their own (which they will repeat throughout the series of *nwole* rites), in which they race round in a circle, jumping, jostling each other, and roaring 'like bulls' (their own simile). A month or two later another, smaller, beer feast takes place, at which Mondo will be presented by his relatives with new sandals of giraffeskin. A few days later Mondo acts as 'Master of the Hunt' (*see* p. 58), presenting the game which is brought back to the old *dermoco* of the community. On the next day a sacrifice called *nmaro* takes place; it repeats the essential features of the previous *lortede* rite, but also includes the assumption by the *dermoco*-to-be of a new emblem of his status, a cowrie necklace, from which this rite takes its name.

On this occasion Mondo distributes five to twenty goats (according to his wealth) among his paternal and maternal relations. The next day again is the day of the cicatrization. It is followed by another distribution of animals, to paternal and maternal relations, to in-laws and—as a fee for the operation—to the *barto*. After the cicatrization, Mondo will discard the fly switch and cowrie bracelet, and carry instead a stick with ram's hair tied to the top. About ten days after the operation Mondo must present a ram to the age-grade *kur* of his village. The same day he will kill a first bull, and a few days later a second bull, which is the occasion for a final feast and dance. The bull's meat is carved and distributed in accordance with strict rules, different parts of the body going to different recipients—to Mondo's father, mother and wives, to his brothers and sisters, paternal and maternal clan relations, and to the other *dermoco* of the community. Only the first and last of these various rites take place in the *dermoco*-to-be's own house; all others, including the operation, are performed in the house of a brother.

From the day of the first announcement of the forthcoming rite till the final bull sacrifice the new *dermoco* will walk completely naked, wearing a red turban, and carrying his emblems of status; 'walk' is an incorrect description, for he jumps and dances along whenever he catches sight of anyone, always with a song on his lips, to show to the world at large 'how happy he is'. He must observe certain avoidances, which should help him to preserve his strength for the coming ordeal. He must have no sexual intercourse until his wounds are healed (this *tabu* is really severe only after the *lortede* rite); he must not eat beans, for beans would make him short of breath when he is dancing; he should eat plenty of thick, curd milk, except during the last three days before the operation—to do so would make the operation more painful.

As a rule there will be a number of cicatrization ceremonies taking place every year in the same community. They must be so timed that the different *dermoco* candidates perform the main rites in turn; they may not start, say, on the second or third rite before all their fellow candidates have performed the preceding rites. All the old *dermoco* of the community attend the rituals of their future colleagues. Another link, between the ranks of the old men and the age-grades of the boys, is evident in the obligation of the *dermoco* candidates to present a ram to the *kur* of the young men. Indeed, the continuity of a man's development, the unbroken thread from youth to old age, is clearly emphasized. The old men, too, have their *kur*, up on top of the hill on which their village lies. This *kur* is the scene of a final ceremony, called *mapovro*, which marks the official adoption of the men who have undergone cicatrization into the ranks of the *dermoco*. This ceremony contains a number of elements of uncertain symbolic significance, e.g. the new *dermoco* are offered dried bull's meat (left over from the sacrifice), while the *dermoco* of old standing feast on guinea-fowls; or the new *dermoco* are presented, together with the dried meat, with the twig of a certain

tree (*kwono*) which does not otherwise appear in Otoro rituals. The meaning of one feature, however, is quite clear; it brings out a close resemblance of the ritual procedure in the *mapovro* with the final name-taking rite in the triennial age-grade promotion. Like the age-grade novices, the new *dermoco* are bundled together inside the *kur*, while their seniors sit outside. One of the *dermoco* who received their rank the previous year acts as usher, much as the *babo no nyare* in the age-grade rite. Again, the new *dermoco* file out, one by one, to receive from the hands of their seniors the dried meat and the twig of the *kwono* tree. They place the meat into the bags of wild-cat skin, called *kuret*, which form the emblem of the fully fledged *dermoco*, and which they will from now on carry with them always.

Let us for a moment reflect on the contribution of the age-grades (in the widest sense) to tribal morale. The age-grades give to the individual, from youth to old age, an aim to live for. He must prove his worth in intense competition; he must gain distinction, public applause, and achieve fame. It is an intolerant way of life; there is no room in it for those who, by nature or ill-luck, fall short of this exigent ideal. I may here quote an anecdote which illustrates this 'intolerant' tribal morale. At certain tribal games Otoro men were matched against Tira. The Tira did better in every game than the Otoro. Whereupon the latter, led by their incensed chief, broke off the contest and marched home. You will call the Otoro 'bad losers'; so they are—but this is only another name for their fierce single-mindedness.

We turn to a contribution of a different order which the age-grades make to tribal life—to the integration of the group.

It is a puzzling rule that every one of the ceremonials linked with the age-grades—age-grade rites proper as well as the ceremonies and feasts of the *dermoco*—must be performed by two local age-grade groups, two *kur*, together. It is always the same two age-grade groups which enter into this partnership, e.g. the age-grade groups of Chungur and of Kongre, of Urila and of Kodedre, of Medka (Kodi) and of Coka, &c. We cannot explain this twin-group arrangement, nor yet the larger dual division to which it leads—unless we are content to accept it merely as a convenient numerical distribution. The single age-grade organization embraces, as we have heard, a number of neighbouring villages; the two groups together embrace in many cases the whole hill community. This is the case in Urila, Karindi, and Orombe.[1] The twin hills of Kujur have twice two age-grade groups, one of which is recruited from the neighbouring small Kujama hill. The northern flank of Chungur numbers two, the southern four age-grade groups. Now, the local division from which the single age-grade organization is recruited represents that small 'community within a community', 'drawn together by the fact of

[1] As regards Urila, this is no longer true. One of the two original divisions of Urila hill, Kodedre, has recently been further subdivided (owing to the increase of population), into Kodedre proper and Coka, the last community being now in age-grade partnership with Medka (Kodi).

their geographical position', of which we have spoken in the preceding chapter (*see* p. 88). But the age-grade organization does not only underline, but adds to, this group life born of daily intercourse and neighbourliness. It renders conscious a 'togetherness' that evolved haphazardly, and draws the sharp boundary line of regular concerted action round a group which is, physically, ill-defined.

In their *kur* the age-grade organizations invest the community with a visible centre. In fact, when referring collectively to the men of a local community the people will often speak of *kur*, not of 'village' or 'settlement'. At some tribal festivity, for example, you will see the old men sit in a number of separate groups; you are told: 'They belong to different *kur*.' In the two-*kur* group the same social integration may be repeated on a larger scale, here referring to a community well defined as such by habitat, the possession of common land and—as we shall see—common political action. The age-grade groups themselves, mobilizing 'common action' in their own sphere, may be regarded as nuclei of a political organization. It seems no accident, then, that the modern political division of Otoro into local sub-chiefships is correlated with the local division according to age-grade groups. The first information which I received when inquiring into the age-grade system was that 'every chief has his *normoco*'. The two-*kur* group reflects a similar twin structure in the political field; of the two local units which it represents one is under the local sub-chief himself (*Sheikh*), the other under his deputy (*Wakil*).[1]

In the climax of age-grade life, the triennial *najo* ceremony, the tribe as a whole is brought into play and its unity made manifest. The focus of tribal unity, chieftainship, is revealed as clearly.[2] We have seen that the Master of Ceremonies must come from the village which is the residence of the chief, and that the whole ceremonial starts from that village. Again, then, age-grade 'common action' mirrors the political structure—mirrors and sustains it: for the *najo* awakens, through its impressive context, and in an impressive age, the consciousness of tribal unity which must govern workaday action and adult life.

It will seem surprising that this promotion rite which so logically completes the picture of Otoro adolescence is an innovation in tribal life. All informants agree that the *najo* was introduced from Tira within living memory by one of the Otoro tribal chiefs. But, like the *najo*, the institutions which it subserves, the political unit of the tribe and paramount tribal chieftainship, are of recent origin and have arisen only some generations ago. The group and its integrative mechanism, then, emerged together. If my informations are correct—and I have no reason to doubt this—we discover here a striking instance (rare on the level of these

[1] This correspondence is not quite complete. But then, as the people explained, 'chiefs are new, and the *normoco* is old.'

[2] The two northern Otoro communities, Kujama and Kujur-Loro, originally performed their *najo* ceremony together, and apart from the rest of the tribe, at a place between Otoro and Heiban. In recent years they, too, joined the common all-tribal celebration.

primitive societies) of the capability of political systems to create their own 'integrative mechanisms'.

Whether in our case it was created (or introduced) consciously, by a far-sighted leader of the group, or unwittingly as the result of the adoption of what may have appeared a picturesque and stimulating ceremony, I will not decide.[1]

Law and Political System

In Otoro, with its indigenous tribal chieftainship, the political organization is easy enough to identify. But though indigenous, Otoro chieftainship is young; to study it is still to watch it emerge from a chiefless society. Heiban still represents this chiefless state, save for the superstructure of modern Government chieftainship. How, then, do we identify the political system in a society devoid of the palpable elements of political existence—chieftainship or some other visible institution of government?

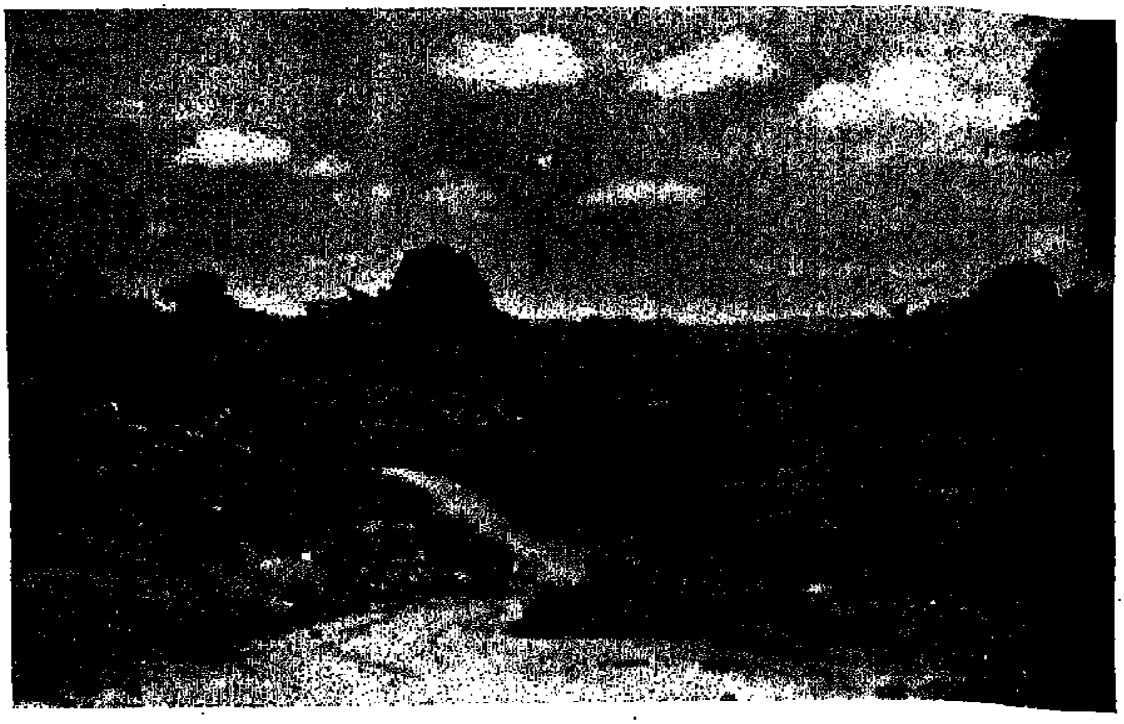
In speaking of political systems or political units (as against kinship system, racial or tribal units), we think, above all, of two aspects of social existence: the collective identity which the group assumes towards outside, i.e. towards other, similarly organized groups; and the internal identity and unity which it presents to its own members. Ultimately, these two aspects can be described only in terms of force: for the external collective identity fulfils itself in the concerted action of war or similar forms of aggression (though this 'fulfilment' may be, as it were, suspended by treaties); and the internal identity means essentially the maintenance of peace, the acceptance of a common system of law and order which excludes—outlaws (as a 'breach of the peace')—the use of force within the group. In more highly developed societies a central authority controls the former and safeguards and enforces the latter (by another use of force—the sanctioned, approved force which it is the prerogative of governments to wield). In the embryonic political systems with which we shall mostly be dealing in this book the law and its enforcement are both more diffuse and more restricted. The law is enforced, not by the actions of an appointed authority, but by public approval of 'self-help'; and 'law and order' often covers only a small segment of social life. But the basic facts of political existence will always remain visible in the sharp differentiation between the use of force within and without the group.[2]

The traditional political unit in this sense is the single hill community. The group sharing a common tract of land and united in the tasks of livelihood also accepts the union of a common peace. In the small Heiban

[1] The former, as we shall see, is the contention of the people. Though the truth of this cannot, of course, be discovered, the very fact that the people think along these lines shows their awareness of this 'integrative mechanism' as a corollary of the political system.

[2] These general principles of primitive law are elaborated in Chapter XII, pp. 499-504.

OTORO HUNTERS
SETTING OUT
ON AN
EXPEDITION



NYIMA HILLS

DILLING

WATERING CATTLE IN KORONGO

tribe the hill community happens to coincide with the tribe. In Otoro the wider identity of tribe and political unit appears as the goal of the political development. Chieftainship, which emerged in one hill community, Chungur, was moving towards a far-flung tribal rule. I said 'was', because at the time of the advent of the present Government this evolution, though visible, was far from complete: as yet, there was no *pax Otorica*.

Within the hill community organized attacks on life or property were outlawed; outside, even between hill communities of the same tribe, they were the normal thing—an accepted means of enriching oneself and a publicly encouraged method of displaying courage and enterprise. These acts of aggression never reached the scale of planned collective actions of the group at large. They represented, not real wars, but irregular raids for livestock or slaves, carried out by a few individuals on the settlements of another group or whenever they espied an opportunity of kidnapping or killing an 'enemy'—on the farms, in the bush, on the way to waterholes. Yet the concept of collective action entered indirectly into this internecine warfare. The attacks and fights tended to become established and traditional between definite hill communities. Every man in one community was a sworn, traditional enemy of every individual in the other group. Thus the people of Urila would always raid their northern neighbours, Kujur and Kujama. Orombe fought with Kujur and Shuway; Chungur with its neighbours in the east, the neighbouring hill communities of Tira. Moreover, the individuals were influenced and stimulated by the collective prestige of the community to which they belonged. The people of Urila, for example, speak of their hill as the home of the bravest and most daring fighters, disparaging their traditional enemies, Kujur and Kujama, as weaklings and cowards. The people of Chungur will describe to you their generations-old feuds with Tira as the fights of a righteous, peace-loving group against a horde of thieves and inveterate raiders. These statements will not stand impartial examination. However, it is not their objective truth that matters, but the conviction which they impart. These biased generalizations are, above all, expressions of group consciousness, and their praises or disparagements, elements in the familiar ideologies with which societies tend to affirm to themselves their collective existence.

Attacks and fights were entirely without a code. One would capture or kill men, women and children indiscriminately. It was slightly more impressive to have killed or captured a man than a woman. But the thought that it might be more honourable to pitch one's strength and cleverness against a worthy enemy was (and still is) quite alien to the people. Or, rather, it is alien to them in this context. The conception of a chivalrous combat belongs to the context of sport and games, carried out within the community; outside it—against the 'enemy'—success alone counts. The thought of killing an enemy seems to have been as powerful an incentive as the economic motive of bringing home valuable booty.

The kidnapping of enemies—mostly boys and girls—had two meanings: the captive was either sold as a slave to Arabs or other Nuba tribes or adopted into the captor's family. The element of gain in the latter case can only be understood when interpreted in the spirit of kinship organization. The adoption of the captive meant the addition of a kinship member, the growth of kindred and clan, which, normally, could only be achieved through marriage and bride-price exchange. It is the same spirit which also drove clans and families to fight for any member they lost in war or by accident with the sole aim of replacing the victim or, at least, of weakening the enemy group by an equal loss.

The Tribal Code

When an Otoro man killed an enemy, he had to undergo certain purification rites before he was allowed to resume his ordinary life. He slept outside the village, in an abandoned hut, for eight days ; he had to eat from broken gourds and had to paint his body white. Finally, after a sacrifice, he was allowed to return home. But the elements of ritual purification were mixed with those of triumph and public approval. During the period of isolation there was dancing and singing, at which the hero proudly displayed the trophies which he had won in the combat and was carried in triumph on the shoulders of the young men. A pattern of scars, cicatrized on his back, would remain a lasting emblem of his feat. The fact that he had shed blood necessitated ritual purification; but morally his action was not evil; and from the point of view of accepted social values it made him a hero, not an outcast; it bore the mark of valour, not the stigma of a crime.

But if an Otoro or Heiban man kills another person within his own community—a friend, that is, not an enemy—he violates the group code. His action is both evil and unlawful, and demands punishment and retaliation. The man who kills an enemy might, of course, also have to face revenge; but this would be in the nature of 'luck of war'—a chance retaliation devoid of the element of moral inevitability.

Again, you may kidnap a boy or a girl from the enemy group, or raid the herds of an enemy village, and be proud of it. There is a special dance, called *nabodha*, at which the young men recite (not always truthfully) their exploits in this field; the girls will compose songs about the clever raiders. But if you steal animals belonging to a man of your own group, you are simply a thief. There is no glory in this, and the retaliation which you must expect will be in the nature of a punishment backed by public opinion. Theft, incidentally, between friend or enemy, is subject to that code of honour which is lacking so conspicuously in homicide: for, whatever one steals or captures, one would never steal grain from the fields or the drying stacks. There is no need to guard the grain: this kind of theft simply 'does not happen'.

We can draw these parallels no further. For the group morality, the rules of conduct within the group, cover a wider field of human action

than do the contingencies of inter-group conflicts. They cover a wider field also than is recognized by the machinery of law. There exist violations of the group code against which the community takes no action, directly or indirectly—in other words, there exist moral delicts which are not legal offences. They are not legal offences, either owing to the nature of the offence as such, or because they are committed within the clan, within a segment of the community so closely knit and possessed of so strong a collective identity of its own that the community at large takes no cognizance of its internal frictions. The first group of offences occurs only in Heiban. It comprises acts violating the religious tenets of the society, which are essentially the tenets of a cult of the land and of fertility. Such acts are the infringement of seasonal food *tabus* (e.g. the eating of first fruits during the 'close season'); the violation of other seasonal *tabus* of a more mystic nature, forbidding dancing, singing, shouting or whistling on land that bears growing crops; and, most sinister of all, the aggravation of adultery, rape, or bloodshed by committing these secular crimes blasphemously on cultivated land. All these acts constitute a desecration of the land, and endanger its fertility. If they come to the knowledge of the local grain priest, he will fine the culprit a pig or goat and, with the animal, perform a purification sacrifice that would neutralize the evil deed.

As regards the second group of offences, we have already met with instances when discussing incest and the breach of exogamous rules. Their punishment—leprosy—is left to supernatural agencies. Similarly, no 'legal' action is taken in the case of adultery with clanswomen and, in Heiban, homicide between clan members; again, the sanction is leprosy. The only human reaction involved is an avoidance between the families of killer and killed: they must never drink beer together, lest they expose themselves to the same sanction. In Otoro retaliation and human action are as a rule equally excluded in the case of homicide in the clan. But it is possible, after ten to fifteen days, to perform a purification rite, arranged by the old men of the clan, which would end the beer-drinking avoidance between the two families. At this ceremony the two families meet, sitting on opposite sides of a river bed, each group behind a pot of beer. The root of a certain tree (*kdro*), which is reputed to prevent leprosy, has been pounded and mixed with the beer. One by one, the individuals first of one group then of the other cross over to the opposite bank, drink of the beer, and return to their group, the reconciliation completed. The ceremony is called *umar*, which is also the name of an allied institution, designed to eliminate blood feud and hostility between clans (*see* p. 152).

The exclusion of retaliation in the clan means the exclusion of acts violating group solidarity; it does not mean the exclusion of the emotional reactions—anger and hostility—which are behind retaliation. These reactions occur, setting family against family, and are expected to occur. They are nevertheless subordinated to the inviolate unity of the clan. If necessary, the chief and old men of the community would add persuasion

to the dictate of clan morality; the hostile sections are kept apart by avoidances or reconciled by rites of expiation. We noted the time interval between the act of homicide and the Otoro expiation ritual: it is meant to allow passions to die down and moral conscience to emerge.

We turn now to the offences which warrant legal action. They are three: matrimonial offences (adultery, seduction); property offences; and ordinary homicide. We will examine the legal systems of the two tribes side by side. The design of Heiban law will show itself more simple and clear-cut; that of Otoro, more complex and confused. The blurred design is symptomatic of the changing political structure of Otoro which (at the time which we are considering) had yet to find its final form. Moreover, the change was on two planes. For while chieftainship was extending its domination in space, bringing the wider area of the tribe under a common peace and a common law, it still needed to extend its authority in depth and to secure—even in its very centre—a fuller control of social life.

In this and the following descriptions of tribal law we shall omit the domain of 'civil law'. Its rules are embodied in the description of the social institutions they subserve (marriage, inheritance), and disputes are settled, as described in that context, within the narrow groups concerned. As we have already seen, the disputes are nowadays submitted to the chief or Native Court. But in the traditional conception of tribal law they have no place; they never concern the society at large or invoke the mechanisms which uphold that wider social (or political) order.[1]

Matrimonial Offences. As we have seen, the wronged party is entitled to self-help, in Heiban as well as in Otoro. But public approval or acquiescence stops there. If, in the course of this action, a life is lost, this constitutes a separate crime, dealt with in accordance with the rules governing ordinary homicide.

Property Offences. Theft on a small scale would be settled by negotiation, relatives and neighbours usually prevailing upon the thief to return the stolen property or its equivalent. If the thief has it no longer and has no other property from which the loss can be made good (a typical situation with juvenile or female thieves), the nearest relations can be held responsible (a woman's husband, brother, or sister; a boy's or girl's parents). The economic assessment hardly lessens the stigma of the crime. Theft, big or small, is a 'bad thing'. Repeated petty thefts may infuriate the people so that they threaten the life of the offender. Clearly, an incorrigible petty thief disturbs orderly community life even more than his more ambitious colleague who limits himself to an occasional exploit. Most of these inveterate petty thieves, incidentally, seem to be women. In one case which I recorded in Otoro (it happened about thirty years ago), a woman had buried her own sister alive in a disused grave because she had proved an incorrigible thief; in another case, the people of the village requested the brother of a woman thief to kill her—he refused, as she was his sister, but agreed to sell her into slavery.

[1] For a fuller theoretical discussion of this question, *see* Chapter XII.

In the case of 'big theft'—that is, above all, of livestock—the owner of the stolen property would collect relations and friends, pursue the thief or attack him in his house or cattle camp, and carry off whatever he found. This was true of Heiban. In Otoro the intervention of the chief tended to supersede 'self-help'. The owner of the animals would complain to the chief, who would summon the thief and order him to restore what he had stolen. Should the thief ignore the summons—as he might if he thought himself strong enough to reject this interference—the chief would enlist the help of every man on whom he could rely, attack the offender and strip him and those who dared to come to his aid of all their possessions. The stolen property or its equivalent would be restored to the owner; the rest would be seized by the chief and partly divided among his loyal helpers. Information shows, however, that a modified self-help continued to be practised under Otoro chieftainship. The owner of the stolen property might still take the law into his own hands if he thought himself strong enough, and would only present a portion of his booty to the chief, thus buying his acquiescence.

Homicide. In Heiban it entails blood feud, which is carried on until exact revenge has been achieved; a man must be killed for a man, a woman for a woman; even in their age the two victims must be as closely matched as possible. The duty to avenge the death devolves, not on an individual, but on the whole clan. One after another the clans fellows of the killed will go out to secure their quarry. Again, the revenge is not directed against an individual—the murderer himself—but against any member of the enemy clan who satisfies the conditions of this law of revenge. If, in the course of the blood feud, two or more individuals were killed in revenge for the original victim, every additional death would constitute another cause for revenge, until the account is squared on both sides. When this balance is reached, the feud lapses without further ceremony. Until then the two clans may not drink beer together—in their own houses or elsewhere—lest leprosy befall them.

Let us realize what this beer-avoidance means. In a community where every ritual or feast is celebrated with beer-drinking the avoidance entails a temporary isolation of the two groups, tantamount to social ostracism. It represents a penalty for ignoring or even delaying the duties of revenge which sharply distinguishes retaliation in the case of homicide from the retaliation called for in what are evidently minor crimes—adultery or theft. The latter imply merely public acquiescence in, and approval of, self-help. In homicide this approval becomes an order, enjoined on a specific section, the clan, and pressed by the threat of social isolation. Yet the society at large takes no action. The ostracism follows from observances dictated by the moral conscience of the sections affected by the crime. The law of the society, its expression and execution, remains vested in the collective responsibility of the segments.

The moral conscience is kept awake after a particular crime has been avenged and expiated. For the individual families of killer and killed

may not drink beer even after the blood feud itself has been concluded; nor may they ever intermarry. I was shown a leper who, the people insisted, owed the disease to the fact that he had drunk beer with a son of the man who had killed his father-brother; and another leper who had accepted blood money from the murderer of his brother instead of fulfilling the duty of blood revenge.

Homicide between clans of the same community is, and most probably has always been, much rarer in Otoro than in Heiban. It might lead, again, to blood feud and exact revenge. But there existed, in Otoro, an alternative which avoided this extreme measure—namely, the offer, by the kin group of the offender, to surrender one of its own members to take the place of the victim in the latter's family and clan. The person to be exchanged had to correspond in sex and age to the victim. It might be the offender himself, or alternatively a person belonging to his maternal clan —which explains the name of the institution: it is called *ŋmar*, which is the collective Otoro term for all maternal clan relations. In stating this rule I am following my informants, who stressed the linguistic correlation and also explained that the substitute would be chosen from a considerable number of relations so qualified. It is, however, doubtful if 'maternal clan' in this context refers to the whole range of maternal clan relations or only to the close relations who share with the offender maternal as well as paternal clan. The four cases which I have been able to record give no conclusive answer; for the exchanged person was always either the offender himself or his full brother or sister.[1]

But maternal clan descent remains the guiding concept in this institution. Through it, the paternity of the exchanged individual is symbolically cancelled; he is accepted into his new family and clan as though he were the legitimate offspring of a (fictitious) marriage union between his new adoptive father and his real mother. This fiction is maintained in the relations of the two families between which the exchange takes place. They stand to each other in the exact relationship of a man's paternal and maternal families: they are not allowed to intermarry or to eat together after the *ŋmar* exchange has taken place, though—like real in-laws—they may drink beer with one another.

Let me add that maternal affiliation also shows its importance in a related context. It may apparently modify the normal attitude towards homicide in the clan. Informants claimed that, if assailant and victim happened to belong to different families, and so be sons of different mothers, their maternal relations would sometimes refuse to be satisfied with the ritual expiation alone, and also demand the *ŋmar* exchange. This

[1] The linguistic identification of the institution and the maternal clan presents another problem. The same institution, known by the same name, occurs in Tira, though there the substitute is chosen from the paternal clan of the offender. The Tira also call all paternal clan relations collectively *ŋmar*, and use this term generally for adoption into the (patrilineal) clan. The more consistent use of the term in Tira suggests that both institution and name originated there. If this is so, the Otoro must have extended the name of this 'adoption' to the group primarily affected by it.

denial of clan unity seems illogical; for in the patrilineal system the maternal group can neither lose nor re-acquire a member. The intervention of maternal kin must therefore represent only an emotional reaction which, though accepted, does not amount to a 'legal' right.

The *nmar* exchange implies full adoption into the family and (paternal) clan of the victim and the severance of all links with the former life. If an exchanged man was married, he must leave his wife (who would remarry under the rules of widowhood). If he steps into the place of a married man, he will marry his widow after a ceremony corresponding to that performed in levirate marriage. An exchanged woman will similarly leave her husband and marry the husband of the woman whose place she is taking. The exchanged individual must not even visit his former family. If the two families are friendly, a man might be allowed to take spears, shields, and hunting trophies with him, but nothing else; a woman, her pots and pans. The exchange does not always work out smoothly, especially if the question of marriage complicates the issue. In a recent *nmar* exchange a married man had been exchanged for an unmarried victim. Dissatisfied with his new unmarried state, he regularly visited his ex-wife and even built himself a house situated halfway between his new and old home. His adoptive parents complained to the chief, who summoned the man and warned him to fulfil his obligations.

The actual exchange is preceded by two ceremonies of reconciliation and adoption. Until the final ceremony, beer-drinking between the two clans is forbidden. The first ritual takes place in the house of the adoptive father-to-be. The two families meet for the sacrifice of a goat supplied and killed by the father of the victim. The blood of the animal is mixed with beer to which the 'anti-leprosy' root of the *kdro* tree mentioned before has been added. The father of the victim offers the beer first to his new son, with these words: 'Drink this beer. You have now become my son.' The (real) brothers of the man to be exchanged drink next, and after them the rest of the family. The animal is cut in two, the fore-part being kept by the family of the victim, the hind-part going to the family of the *nmar* man. They return home with him and eat the meat at home. A few days later the same ceremony is repeated in the house of the other family. Now the *nmar* man himself, ready to leave his home, addresses his new family: 'I now belong to you. I am like your son and brother.' Occasionally, it seems, the family of the victim would demand blood money (three to four cows) in addition to the *nmar* exchange.

We note that, unlike Heiban, Otoro terminates the blood feuds with special rituals of purification. But the Otoro expiation is more complete; the two families are no longer forbidden to drink beer together, and the curse of leprosy which might befall those who disregard the beer-avoidance is definitely laid.

The relation between the Otoro law of homicide and the growth of

chieftainship is difficult to trace. It is difficult to decide whether or not the *nmar* exchange represents a traditional alternative to blood feud or already an effort of chieftainship to exclude the use of force within the group (whatever its confines). The informations which I collected seem to show that the latter is true. Indeed, the *nmar* exchange may well have been introduced by the Otoro chiefs from Tira, where the same institution appears, deeply rooted, under the same name. However this may be, informants always speak of the *nmar* exchange as a rule super-imposed upon blood feud and suggested or enforced by the chief. For it was not uncommon in the past that families or clans would insist on revenge and refuse to accept or surrender the *nmar*, whereupon the chief would collect his men and drive the group which thus threatened to break the peace from the hill. The 'rebels' would flee to Tira or Shuway; in exile, they would soon see reason and accept the more peaceful settlement. The chief need not himself take part in the negotiations or in the ceremony, though he might do so if he felt doubtful about the sincerity of one or the other party.

If then, blood feud represents the original method of dealing with homicide, the question arises whether it emerged already between the warring hill communities, and independently of the efforts of chieftainship to establish a tribal peace. Now we realize that the limitation of blood feud to the single hill community would be bound up with the limitations of community life itself. The sanctions turning chance revenge into a moral duty—the threat of leprosy and the veiled social ostracism of the beer-drinking avoidance—can be effective only with clans which share in the communal life. This system of law and order, bound up with the collective responsibility of clans, would remain valid within the confines of the hill community and invalid outside only as long as different communities were composed of different clans. Once clans began to spread to other hill communities—and genealogies show that these migrations were contemporaneous with the state of tribal 'lawlessness'—the clear-cut distinction between friend and enemy must have become blurred. It was clearly possible for a man of clan A to kill with impunity one of clan B in another hill as long as A and B would never come into contact, possibly not even know each other. Nor could the people of B be held to pursue blood revenge. But when there were people of A and B living in the same community, the rights and wrongs of the case became problematical (as my informants all admitted). There could only be two solutions: either to regard the split-off clan sections as separate clans, or to recognize blood feud between the different communities, and so extend the 'in-group' law until it embraces wider and wider groups. That the first solution did evolve is shown in the gradual restriction of other clan obligations (exogamy) to close clan relatives and the abandonment of the wider, 'theoretical' clan unit. As regards the second solution I have no concrete evidence (except a few disconnected memories of informants). But I believe that it, too, evolved—independently of the efforts of chieftainship

to achieve tribal unification. I believe, in fact, that in fostering a new, tribal law chieftainship only utilized an already existing trend.

We may add that mere wounding entailed no revenge either in Heiban or in Otoro. A communal meal or beer feast of no ritual significance would allay the tension and anger between the families concerned. The Heiban people always distinguished between culpable homicide and manslaughter, e.g. under the influence of drink, or in a general brawl precluding intentional killing. Such accidental killing did not cause 'anger', and blood money replaced the blood revenge. The Otoro, in the past, ignored this distinction. Any loss of life due to human action was, in their eyes, culpable homicide. The verdict in homicide cases may, however, be influenced by doubts concerning the cause of death, especially if death does not follow immediately upon the assault. If death occurs within a fortnight after a wound or a blow have been inflicted, this is as a rule regarded as proof that death was caused by the assault. If death occurs after this time it is assumed to be due to natural causes. I witnessed, however, also the following case: two boys were quarrelling, and one beat the other with a twig across his body. The boy fell ill and died within two days. The verdict was natural death, for the twig was too thin and light, in the opinion of the court, to have caused death.

Ordeals. In the foregoing account we have assumed that the crimes and offences with which we were dealing were tangible crimes—the deed certain, and its perpetrator known. We disregarded the cases of adultery, murder, and theft—above all, theft—in which the accusation is against 'some person or persons unknown'. But justice, in the Nuba sense, includes them as well, though it has to take recourse to magic and witchcraft.

Of varied nature and very numerous, these supernatural devices to discover and bring to justice an unknown criminal are also subject to fashion. A man in Heiban who finds some of his animals missing, but is not quite certain whether they had been stolen or have merely strayed, may begin his inquiries by consulting a diviner (*nworo*). The diviner can only tell him whether it was theft or not, but cannot help him further. The next step, then, is to present a goat to the local grain priest, who will sacrifice it and speak thus: 'The man who stole, his *dgrim* (soul) shall come hither and die with this animal.' The culprit, it is said, will die within three or four days, unless he repents and returns the stolen animals. This method is now obsolete, though it is still practised in a somewhat weaker form, the owner of the stolen animals himself uttering this magic wish during the performance of some seasonal rite or sacrifice presided over by the grain priest. Or one can appeal to the rain-maker of the tribe, again paying a goat for the discovery and punishment of the thief. The magic of the rain-maker will cause the thief to be killed by lightning. Whenever a person is struck by lightning one assumes (a safe enough assumption in these hills) that he has, at one

time or other, committed a theft, and the relatives will hurriedly offer more goats to the rain-maker as well as to the owner of the stolen animals (if he is known), so that the curse may be lifted.

This is the most up-to-date method: certain persons possess powerful charms, bought from itinerant Arab or West African charm-sellers, which are reputed to kill evil doers.[1] You can borrow such a charm, and wander round the village, passing every house, flourishing the charm. Then you sit down and wait: after a month or so the thief will either repent or die. Considering its publicity, this magic may well prove sufficiently persuasive; even after the sudden death of a suspected thief his relatives will offer to return the stolen animals, for the magic would continue to work until it is stopped by a complicated rite of purification.[2]

The Otoro, too, use these charms, though in a different fashion. The owner of the stolen animal collects the droppings of the animal or sand from its tracks; he knocks his charm against them and says: 'No one shall eat my goats (or sheep, or cows); if he eats them he shall die.' The thief will fall ill, his nose will bleed and he will pass blood; he will die unless he confesses and asks that the magic be lifted. This is done by washing the charm in water and sprinkling the water over the victim. Another method is the use of witchcraft proper against a suspected thief. One scratches sand from his footprints and throws it into the fire; if he is guilty (but not otherwise) his feet will swell and he will die a painful death, often years later.

The Otoro also practise the more dispassionate and, in a sense, more impartial method of inviting the suspect to clear himself by swearing or by submitting to an ordeal. The owner of a *kitab* may let the suspect swear his innocence on this charm. A more impressive oath is on the spear of the rain-maker (in Urila) or of the 'Chief of the Path' (in Chungur—we shall hear more of him presently). The former oath means that the perjurer will be struck by lightning; the latter, that he will be killed by some iron tool—he might cut himself when reaping grain, or fall on his spear in the dark. A person suspected of the theft of food (honey, beer, flour, also of a fowl) or of witchcraft will be made to prove his or her innocence by the following test (of modern, Arab origin). Cow's urine is heated in a pot over the fire until it boils; a needle is dropped into it, and the suspect, who has first been washed with water, must lift the needle with the fingers out of the pot. If he is guilty, the boiling fluid will spill over and scald his arms and body. The identical treatment of theft of food and of witchcraft reflects the belief that any theft of food might be a preliminary to witchcraft. If such stolen food

[1] The charms are known by the Arabic name, *kitab*, or, in vernacular, as *kdam*, which also means 'oath' and 'ordeal' in general. One distinguishes two kinds of charms: *kdam kidel buny*, 'aimless', i.e. harmless charms, and *kdam kre*, 'bitter' charms, possessed of deadly magic.

[2] Another modern practice is to summon the help of one of the Koalib *shamans*, called *bayel*, who now live in Heiban or visit it regularly. I have given a description of their methods elsewhere ('A Shaman Cult in the Nuba Mountains', in *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XXIV, 1941. *See also* Chapter XI).

is burned over the fire, the body of its owner will swell up, and he (or she) will die.

Ordeals of this kind, in which accuser and accused meet, as it were, on equal terms, are completely absent in Heiban. Indeed they seem to be alien to the spirit of Heiban 'jurisdiction'. There a passionate desire for revenge seems the only thought. I have heard a man utter the curse against thieves during a beer sacrifice with such violence that it seemed as if he were praying for the death, not of an unknown culprit, but of an old, bitter enemy. And in another case a man who lost one goat gladly paid two goats and a spear for the comforting knowledge that the thief, whoever he was, would not live to enjoy his theft. 'I was furious', the man explained to me, 'but now that I know the thief will die, I am happy.'

Modern Government chieftainship, then, has not ousted this self-help by magic means. Clearly, an unknown offender is as unknown to-day as he was before the days of modern administration, and the inevitable limitations of secular justice are still overcome only by supernatural intervention. In Otoro the chief's prerogative to judge and sanction offences has come to embrace also this magic extension of justice. The cow's urine ordeal is still performed, now by order of the chief. Swearing on the spears of rain-maker or Chief of the Path has fallen in disuse; instead, we find a new oath in force, on a *kitab* which the chief himself owns, and which has become almost one of his insignia of office.

Witchcraft.[1] This form of attack on human life is conspicuously absent from our list of traditional crimes. I will only say a few words about witchcraft. It entails no retaliation, human or supernatural, even if it is believed to have caused death. The explanation lies in the meaning which witchcraft has in these two tribes. It is not an evil force acting unrestrictedly and at random. Nor is it only in the possession of certain individuals—witches, sorcerers. Rather it is a magic which anyone can use, and which is effective only if directed against a person (known or, above all, unknown) guilty of a crime. If you have suffered some tort at the hands of another man, your witchcraft against him will be effective; but if you suspected an innocent person, he will remain unharmed. Witchcraft is thus itself a form of retaliation, an agency of a fictitious justice going beyond the realm of action attainable by ordinary human efforts. That, in the passion of revenge, this imaginary retaliation may be carried to a degree of severity disproportionate to the original tort is a feature, as we have seen, not limited to magic self-help.

In Heiban the introduction of the *bayel* spirit cult from Koalib (*see* above, p. 156, footnote) affords now a means of counter-magic and retaliation against witchcraft. I shall presently quote an example. But this counter-witchcraft remains an individual action which in no way expresses group sentiment or the group's sense of justice.

Intertribal Law. The legal relations between different political units are not entirely covered by the formula, 'law within, and lawlessness

[1] It is called *kudigrina*, from *dgrim*, 'soul', i.e. 'stealing the soul'.

without'. To the growth of the political unit in Otoro, to the extension of the area of a 'common law' under the influence of tribal chieftainship, we must add an extension of the concept of law of a different order. Like the former, it modifies the distinction between fellow citizen and stranger and supersedes the clear-cut rule: peace with one, war with the other. But this new extension does not obscure or modify the political units themselves. It leads to the creation of an intermediate 'zone' of law and order, the recognition of a political status half-way between political union and the wide range of 'enemy' groups.

In Heiban this intermediate 'zone' embraces the three hills of common language and culture, Heiban, Abol, and Laro. Between these three groups homicide is regarded neither as natural and justifiable, as it is between enemy communities, nor yet as the grave crime entailing blood feud, as it is within each of these communities. It is sanctioned by exacting blood money—three cows and a gun for a man, and three cows and a bull for a woman. It seems significant that this sanction corresponds to that applied within the group in the case of manslaughter—homicide which causes 'no anger'. The creation of this 'intermediate zone' of law may be compared with the modern device of international treaties between friendly nations which are neither part of the same political system nor yet quite strangers and enemies. This intepretation indeed reflects the view of the people themselves. Originally, they say, there was war between the three groups. The Laro, Abol and Heiban would kill each other at sight. Then, at one time, Heiban and Laro concluded this new agreement, and later Heiban and Abol also (already in British times). The people of Laro, besides, concluded similar pacts with certain hill communities (not with the tribe as a whole) of Koalib. In the relations of Heiban with other tribal groups—Otoro, Tira, Shuway—the old state of 'lawlessness' remained unchanged till the final pacification of the country under British rule.

The Otoro similarly recognize 'intermediate zones' defined by inter-tribal (or, to be exact, inter-community) treaties. Such treaties existed between Chungur hill in Otoro and the Tira, and the Otoro community of Orombe and the people of Shuway. They were renewed periodically —and as periodically broken, their validity being reckoned as one or two years only. These pacts did not attempt to exclude or replace revenge. On the contrary, it was assumed that any killing between the two groups would be followed by blood feud and exact revenge. But once the group claims to revenge had been satisfied, a reconciliation ceremony was performed to stop all further hostilities and announce, once more, inter-tribal peace. The blood feud was not one between clans, but between the tribal communities as such. As we have stated before, this acceptance of a regular blood feud already modified the lawlessness which otherwise governed inter-group relations; in replacing the chance revenge offered in ordinary warfare the rule of blood feud approximated to a bond of common law—a tacit treaty, almost—between the independent groups.

There existed a special hereditary office in Otoro and Tira, the *kwelen kweti tat*, the 'Chief of the Path', who acted as intermediary in these peace negotiations. He belonged in Otoro to the Kodhoro clan and in Tira to the Iltobo clan. The appointment to this office necessitated a significant rite of consecration, though for reasons only indirectly connected with the office itself. The Iltobo clan in Tira was chosen for its special magic, which is concerned with ordeals and oaths (*see* the following chapter). Now, the Otoro clans of Chungur hill, as we have heard, are normally forbidden to drink beer with the Iltobo clan in Tira (*see* p. 87). But this Kodhoro man, who had to meet his Tira colleague regularly and often had to stay as his guest in Tira, could not be bound by this rule. Thus every newly appointed 'Chief of the Path' in Otoro performed a certain sacrifice together with his opposite number in Tira which would cancel, in his case, the tribal *tabu*.

The 'Chief of the Path' was inviolable. He carried a long, broad-bladed spear of Arab pattern, by which he was easily recognized. Whenever the necessity arose, the Otoro and Tira 'Chiefs of the Path' would meet either on one or the other hill, passing unharmed through the enemy country, to fix the day for the reconciliation ceremony. On the appointed day the two groups met at the Kauda River, which forms the tribal boundary, facing each other on opposite banks. The two 'Chiefs of the Path' each brought a ram; they placed the animals side by side on one side of the river, the head of the Otoro animal turned towards Tira and that of the Tira ram towards Otoro. The two men killed the animals with their spears; they left the bodies lying as they fell, only covering their heads with branches of the *kdro* tree (the 'anti-leprosy' tree of previously described ceremonies) and small white stones (the significance of which is obscure). The two 'Chiefs of the Path' swore on behalf of their groups that there should be no further killing, and that leprosy should befall the man who broke this sworn peace. The oath concluded the tribal reconciliation. Although it utilized the familiar beliefs and fears which safeguard clan laws and peace within the community, it was never thought to be equally effective in the case of the intertribal pact. As we have mentioned, after a year or two the oath would lapse and the threat of leprosy be forgotten.

Modern Jurisdiction

Let us in conclusion outline the modern legal system in the two tribes. Adultery and other matrimonial offences come now, as we have seen, under the jurisdiction of the Native Courts. Even offences in the nature of incest (formerly excluded from secular justice) are now brought before the court.[1] Theft, if it can be traced, is punished with fines or prison sentences, and the plaintiff is entitled to restitution, which is added to

[1] I witnessed a case in Heiban in which a man was sentenced by the Native Court to two months in prison for having committed adultery with the wife of his classificatory brother.

the fine. If the thief has no property of his own left, the plaintiff may recover what he lost from the father or brothers (real or classificatory) of the offender. The fines are usually heavy: in one case, for example, a thief who stole one goat was fined ten goats, in another the fathers of three boys who had stolen 10 piastres' worth of honey had to pay 30 piastres each in fines.

Homicide is dealt with, not by the Native Court, but, after a magisterial inquiry, by the judge of the High Court. We are interested here only in the relation of the sentences passed by the High Court—long-term imprisonment or death—with the traditional legal concepts. Modern jurisdiction overrules, first of all, the principle that killing within the clan is not subject to secular justice. As regards other forms of homicide, we find that the punishment by the court is accepted as an equivalent only of actual revenge, but does not replace what other forms of expiation or retaliation exist besides. If blood money were payable, it would still be demanded. In the case of homicide on cultivated land in Heiban, the ritual fine imposed by the grain priest holds good irrespective of the court sentence. The Otoro *nmar* exchange is practised in addition to the official punishment. The various eating and marriage avoidances, finally, between the families of clans of killer and killed remain equally in force; whether they are broken more often now than of old I cannot decide. The peace ritual between Otoro and Tira, on the other hand, has disappeared, the *pax Britannica* having absorbed the local treaties. In Otoro, the modern legal system resulted in the new distinction between manslaughter and culpable homicide. Only the latter is regarded as a real crime, which falls under the jurisdiction of the High Court. Obvious cases of manslaughter are dealt with by the Native Court and settled by *nmar* exchange. This is an example. In 1938 one of two boys who were playing together on a rock fell after a playful push from his friend and was killed. The Native Court dealt with the case, according *nmar* to the father of the victim.

With regard to witchcraft, the situation seems very much in flux. I witnessed one rather harmless witchcraft case which was brought before the Otoro chief. A man had accused his own wife of having stolen some of his honey with the intent of bewitching him. The cow's urine test was applied, and revealed the innocence of the accused. Everyone realized, incidentally, that the man's fear of witchcraft was due to his bad conscience for having refused to share the honey with his wife, as a good husband would. A much more serious accusation in Heiban was not taken to the court, but settled by counter-magic. A visiting Koalib *bayel* priest who had been consulted about the mysterious illness of a young man had discovered that the young man's own father had bewitched him. The brother of the victim left the case in the hands of this spiritual adviser.[1]

[1] *See* my 'Shaman Cult in the Nuba Mountains' (*Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XXIV, p. 105).

The range of cases brought before the chief's court is visibly widening. Even petty offences which no one would formerly have regarded as 'cases' are now submitted to official jurisdiction. This is an amusing instance. A girl sued a man for having torn her pubic apron in rather delicate circumstances. He had been visiting his bride in the *kur*, which she shared with the girl plaintiff. He had apparently carried his 'petting' too far, for the bride began to struggle, he beat her, the other girl came to the assistance of her friend, and, in the ensuing scuffle, had her apron torn. The verdict of the court was an advice to the impetuous girl to mind henceforth her own business.

The Native Courts are composed of the chiefs (*Mek*) and sub-chiefs (*Sheikh*) of the tribes.[1] The chiefs of Heiban, Abol and Laro hold court together, meeting fortnightly in Heiban. Otoro belongs to another 'federal' court, which meets every fortnight at Kauda—which is no place at all, but a sort of mathematical point equidistant from Otoro and Tira—and is composed of the chiefs and sub-chiefs of both tribes. Otoro has besides a lower, tribal court under its own chief, which hears local cases (with appeal to the federal court). It sits in Chungur, the chief's village, and is not tied to any time schedule, but is convoked whenever cases come up. Similarly, sub-chiefs may hear local cases in their own hills and villages, though the sentences which they pass must be confirmed by the higher tribal or federal court.

The procedure at these courts is informal, though a certain etiquette has also emerged. When entering the presence of the chief sitting in court, all bow low, and plaintiffs, defendants, and witnesses cower down in front of him, their eyes averted from his face. From this obeisance only two classes are exempt: the *dermoco*—the recognized elders of the tribe, and Arabs—aliens who are outside tribal discipline. Plaintiffs and defendants appear as a rule accompanied by friends and relations. Passers-by may stop for a while to watch proceedings. Old men often join this group of chance assessors, especially if they hope to be offered beer or tobacco or tea by the chief. They are no more than 'chance assessors' (although some of them may figure on official lists as 'court elders'); they do not attend regularly, nor is their opinion ever asked. The element of direct negotiation between the kinship groups to which defendants and plaintiffs are affiliated, which formed the essence of traditional procedure, has disappeared—much more so than in other Nuba tribes. The court of chiefs is indeed very conscious of its position as an official central authority holding the prerogative of maintaining and enforcing the law.

The change from the old negotiated settlement to the new authoritative system, in which the court dictates sentences and pronounces verdicts, seems nearly complete. Moreover, the court sees itself, not merely as a body enacting a traditional law, but as one combining judicial and

[1] The name for chief *Mek*, which is now commonly used, is probably a Nuba corruption of the arabic *Melik*, 'King'.

legislative functions. This is no doubt partly due to the fact that the Native Court had to devise new rulings in the case of certain old practices vetoed by the Administration (e.g. in Heiban, marriage by capture, or the right of the maternal relations of a wife to seize by force certain belated bride-price gifts). But I have also witnessed a case in which, without outside pressure, a traditional usage was openly disavowed by the court (the case in question actually concerned people from Tira; but it is equally typical of Otoro, and was, in fact, decided by the verdict of the Otoro chief).

A young man who had paid a bride-price which included two cows had one of them rejected by the girl's father as being an inferior animal. The young man, eager to be married as soon as possible, borrowed a better cow from his brother. Surprisingly, the girl's father declined to accept the animal; he insisted that the suitor should pay the full bride-price himself, and threatened to cancel the engagement if the young man failed to do so. This attitude quite obviously ran counter to the accepted practice according to which brothers always help each other with the bride-price payments. It was clear that the real motive of the old man was to get out of his promise and marry his daughter to another, richer son-in-law. The young man took the case to court. It was heard first in the local Tira court, where the chief decided that the girl's father had to accept the cow. The girl's father then appealed to the federal court. And here the Paramount Chief of Otoro dissolved the engagement—against the vote of the sub-chiefs, who emphasized that 'brothers were like one' (the basic principle of the tribal kinship system).

Chieftainship

Chiefless Heiban and pre-chieftainship Otoro are in reality societies without machinery of government. There are no local heads, no clan heads, no councils of elders, to guide collective life or even to symbolize collective existence over and above the segments which compose the society—clans and kindreds. The age-grade system in Otoro to some extent symbolizes this collective unity and moulds adolescence in its spirit. The other links (the only links in Heiban) which exist between the segments—intermarriage, friendship, neighbourly intercourse or co-operation, the union of a religious congregation—draw an irregular pattern of 'belonging together', which does not define the group at large. The political actions of the group are the actions of its several segments. The collective identity of the group emerges only from a diffuse co-ordination of these actions, which is in the nature of a tacit agreement, an abstract understanding. Wars and raids are the actions of individuals or small group sections; but they are aware that in fighting this or that group they follow an established tradition of enmity. Internal disputes are fought out between the sections concerned; again, they know that they are doing what is right, what is expected of them, and that no other section will interfere. The 'common law' and 'common peace'

SPEARING OF BULLS IN KORONGO FUNERAL FEAST
(*see p* 67)

ARAB ROAD SHOPS IN KORONGO

URILA HILL
IN OTORO
ON THE RIGHT
CAIRN SHAPED
SHRINE OF
SEASONAL
FERTILITY
RITES

HEIBAN MOUNTAIN

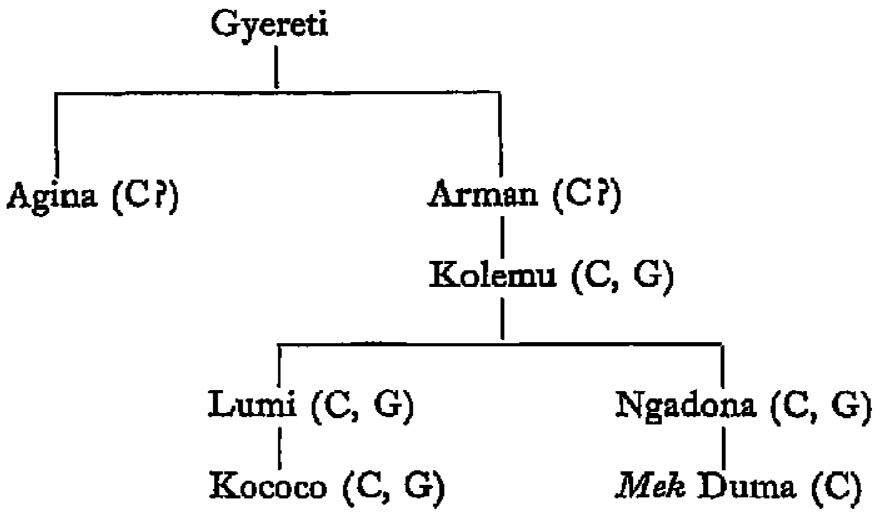
embodied in this tacit and abstract co-ordination must thus be realized through open tests of strength between the segments. The collective unit must maintain itself by measures which jeopardize its very existence as a unit.

We have seen that the first aims of the chieftainship which arose in Otoro were to eliminate this open test of strength between the component segments of the group. It attempted to establish a unity which would supersede the segmentary structure. It assumed the prerogative of using force as a means of maintaining internal peace, and thus transformed the diffuse tacit agreement into a co-ordination of action which chieftainship itself must control and direct. Chieftainship succeeded fully in these attempts only when it had become the supremely strong Government-backed authority. Until then, the best it could achieve was to substitute for the test of strength between the sections of the society a similar contest of strength between itself and recalcitrant group sections. The whole evolution of Otoro chieftainship can, in fact, be described as the gradual acquisition of power strong enough to warrant such contests.

Chieftainship, viewed from this angle, has its roots already in chiefless Heiban and pre-chieftainship Otoro. Men known as *kweleny*—the name also given to the modern chief—appear in the genealogies of the various communities two or three generations ago. They were accepted as leaders by the communities in which they lived. They owed their position chiefly to their wealth in livestock and slaves and, indirectly, to the large following which their wealth would secure them. These men would organize or lead raiding bands into enemy country; or act, in peaceful negotiations, on behalf of their groups. They might found new settlements, being strong enough to offer protection to would-be settlers. Their support would be decisive in the contests of strength between families or clans. Yet withal, this leadership represented a (largely transient) attainment of status rather than an office. The authority of these men ceased as soon as their wealth disappeared or was surpassed by that of another 'big man'. Nor could they lay a legitimate claim to a definite area—their claims reached as far as did their actual influence. They thus contributed nothing towards the unification of the community. On the contrary, the appearance of rival leaders would cause serious dissensions and possibly the break-up of the group. A development of this kind is said to have led to the foundation of Karro (on the Kujur hills of Otoro) by emigrants from Urila. At that time three men were competing for the leadership of the hill community of Urila—Alibu, the rain-maker, and two other men, Morda and Umagya by name. Alibu came to an agreement with Morda, whereupon Umagya emigrated with his family and followers, leaving the field to his more powerful rivals. 'It is a bad thing', commented my informant, 'if you have two big men in the same hill.'

In certain cases the leadership seems to have fallen to men whose power rested, among other things, on a religious office—like the Urila

rain-maker just mentioned, another rain-maker in Kujur, a grain priest in Laro. But the link between the two offices was largely incidental and did not affect the transient nature of the secular leadership.[1] Chieftainship in Laro may be an exception. For in the largest hill community of Jebel Laro, Kindemal, a hereditary chieftainship seems to have arisen which was linked for the last three generations with the hereditary office of a grain priest. One of these hereditary priest-chiefs, Lumi, who lived at the time of the British conquest, is even said to have attained the position of a Paramount Chief (*kweleny konokupá*, i.e. 'Great Chief'), ruling over the nine hills of Laro and their 'small', non-hereditary, and secular, *kweleny*. The intertribal treaties between Laro and Koalib of which we have spoken before are attributed to this same Lumi. This is the genealogy of the Laro chiefs (C behind the name means chief; G grain priest).



The historical data are too uncertain even to confirm the fact of the reputed paramount tribal chieftainship. Nor can we say whether the hereditary religious office contributed to rendering the secular office, too, hereditary, or whether an already established hereditary chieftainship merely strengthened its own position by assuming the religious office as well. There is certain recent evidence of the latter tendency: the chief Kococo (a sub-chief under the modern administration) has added to his grain-priest's office another religious qualification, the priestship of the *bayel* cult—a conspicuous addition since the *bayel* cult is of Koalib origin and was only recently introduced in Laro.

Modern Government chieftainship in Heiban and Laro is only loosely linked with the traditional system (such as it was). The links which exist seem to be incidentally rather than consciously preserved. In electing their modern chiefs or sub-chiefs, the people look for qualifications of a new kind: knowledge of Arabic, acquaintance with the ways of the *Hakuma*, an energetic temperament, and suitable age for undertaking

[1] The rainmaker-chief of Kujur was succeeded by a purely secular *kweleny*. In Urila rain-priestship and chieftainship went together for three generations; but the hereditary principle was not strong enough, as we have seen, to preclude rival claims by ordinary mortals.

the new tasks of office, like tax-collection, recruiting labour for road work, &c. Among the chiefs and sub-chiefs of Heiban we find one who is the son of a former *kweleny*. The Laro chief Kococo was for some time Paramount Chief and is now sub-chief in one hill community, Gilera. *Mek* Duma, the present Paramount Chief, combines traditional with modern qualifications: he is of the chiefly dynasty, but owes his office mainly to his having been a corporal in the police.

The lack of historical data in Laro seems itself an indication of the weak foundations of hereditary tribal chieftainship in that group. For the preservation of the past, the living consciousness of dynastic growth, are indispensable ideological foundations of hereditary rule. As such they appear in Otoro. There, too, tribal chieftainship emerged comparatively recently from local leadership—in Chungur hill—but the records (true or imaginary) of its origin and growth are preserved and treasured already as semi-mythical warrants of the present office. There is no indication that Otoro chieftainship was ever linked with a religious dignity, save, for a time, with the half-religious office of the Master of Ceremonies in the triennial age-grade ritual. The introduction of the *najo* from Tira, which was to foreshadow the political unification of the tribe, is attributed to the first chief of Chungur, Tula, who was himself of Tira origin.[1]

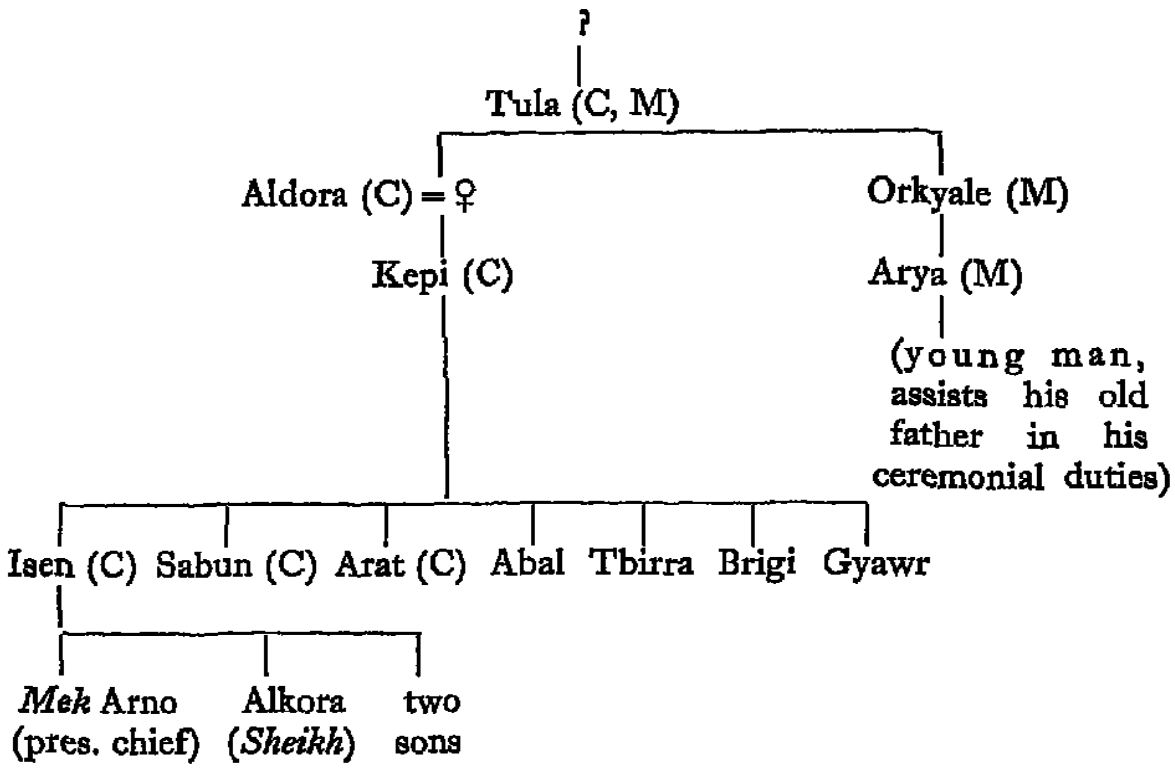
This Tula is said to have married the daughter of the then *kweleny* of Orombe, Andana, and to have settled later on Chungur hill, which was at the time uninhabited. He assumed the office of the 'Master of the *najo*' with the intention of uniting all Otoro sections in the common ceremonial. But two hill communities, the tradition goes on, Urila and Kujur, refused to attend the ceremony together because of their old mutual enmity. Tula thereupon turned the magic of the *najo* against them, so that their crops failed and they suffered famine. This brought them to heel, and they were ready to join the union of the other tribes.[2]

After Tula's death secular rule and the priestship of the *najo* ceased to be combined in the same person, and fell to two branches of the dynasty which Tula founded. This is shown in the genealogy of the Otoro chiefs on p. 166 (C means chief; M 'Master of Ceremonies').

Tula, having no sons, was succeeded by his son-in-law, an Orombe man. Tula was already strong enough, it appears, to designate a successor. Under Kepi the chieftainship was strengthened by the momentous successes which he achieved in the leadership of his group. It was owing to these successes that his rule spread to other hills of Otoro and that even the Tira were brought into the orbit of Otoro law. I can do

[1] Certain informants associate the introduction of the *najo* with the famous Kepi, who overshadows all other past chiefs of Otoro.

[2] It is interesting that this legend, which is so intent on demonstrating the connexion between the ceremony and tribal unity, fails to account for the fact that till recently half of Kujur hill and Kujama performed the *najo* separately.



no better than quote the life history of Kepi as it was dictated to me by an old man on Kujur hill.

'Aldora was Kepi's father, and his mother was Kodi, a woman from Chungur. When Kepi was small I did not see him. I only heard the story. Everyone knows it. But when Kepi was an old man, I knew him. He was a very big man, he had a white horse, a big house, and he ate meat every day. He was very strong. At the time when Kepi was a young boy, the Mahdi came to this country and raided it for slaves, cattle, goats, and all kinds of things. The Otoro were powerless—they had to let him raid, for they were too weak to stop him. They ran away and hid in the hills, and all their cattle and goats, and even young children, fell into his hands.

'But then Kepi grew up. The Mahdi came again to Otoro with a big army, and captured men and women. Kepi did nothing, and his father, who was a weak man, was powerless. But the next time when the Mahdi came, Kepi, all by himself, went to the Mahdi and said: "What do you want?" The Mahdi said: "I want men for slaves." Kepi said: "Take me, here I am, but leave my people." The Mahdi liked his speech and said: "Very good. I can see you are a man. Come with me and become a great warrior." But then he said: "You are brave and good. I do not want to take you away. You may stay in your country, and I shall not attack you again." Then the Mahdi left. And so it remained for many years; the Mahdi did not attack Otoro again.

'The people were happy and said: "Old Aldora is no good as chief. He could not protect us. There were so many wars; all law has disappeared. No one obeys Aldora; there is no law in Otoro. Let us make Kepi, who

is strong, our *kweleny*." So they made Kepi chief of Otoro; first only the people of Chungur, but later the other hills, too, acknowledged his rule, for he could protect them from the Mahdi.

'The Mahdi came once again to Otoro to raid the hills. Kepi stopped him. He said: "Leave my people be. There, go to Tira Lomon and get your slaves there. These hills are my country, and Tira Lomon shall be your country." The Mahdi did thus. And from this day till the coming of the *Hakuma* there were no more raids or wars.

'First, in the days of the eternal wars, there was no real chief in Otoro, because of the Mahdi, who destroyed all law. The Otoro did not obey any one chief. The Tira also suffered heavily under the attacks of the Arabs. There were also fights between Otoro and Tira; one group was raiding the other and carrying off slaves, goats, and cattle. The Tira had guns—though few—but the Otoro only spears and clubs. But the Otoro were more numerous and often attacked the Tira,[1] and then the Tira attacked the Otoro, and so the wars went on and on. One day Agyago, the chief of Tira,[2] came to Kepi and suggested that they should make peace. The Tira would obey Kepi and acknowledge his authority, and he in turn should protect them from the Mahdi as he protected his people. He should also stop the Otoro from raiding Tira; then the Tira would cease attacking Otoro. Kepi agreed. The Tira brought him many presents of goats, cattle and slaves, but I do not know how many, for this was before my time.

'The Tira did not pay a tribute to Kepi. But when fights broke out between the tribes, Kepi demanded five to ten head of cattle, twenty goats, or one to three slaves as fine from the Tira because they had broken the peace. The Tira were always the trouble-makers. They stole cattle, and then the Otoro attacked Tira villages to punish them. Finally Kepi settled the fight. But every few years it would happen again.

'At that time the Tira villages were not as many as they are to-day. There was only one large settlement, up on top of the mountain. The Tira cattle were plentiful; the Otoro had only little. Sometimes Otoro men would steal cattle from the Tira and give half to Kepi so that he should say nothing. Only if the Tira owner came to complain and could identify the thief would Kepi order the Otoro to surrender the cattle. Not otherwise.

'Kepi was a great man: he wore two big *lola* (wire cuffs) on each arm; he had a very long Arab spear; he had four horses, twelve bulls and nineteen wives. His stock of bulls never diminished. He slaughtered them again and again, but he always had new ones. He obtained them from the fines which he imposed on people who disobeyed him.

'When the Government came, they made him *Mek*. He was an old man then, and died four or five years later.'

[1] This admission is rather at variance with the accepted opinion in Otoro, that it was always the Tira who attacked a peaceful Otoro. We shall see that our informant is not very consistent in his unorthodox view.

[2] I have been unable to identify this chief in the list of Tira chiefs which I recorded in Tira. Probably the name quoted is that of a 'Chief of the Path'.

Thus the account of my informant. The collective fines which, according to him, the Otoro chief imposed upon the Tira as a penalty for the breach of the intertribal peace is not well substantiated. Other informants speak of a retaliation which took the following form: If an Otoro man had been attacked and wounded by a Tira, the Otoro would at once raid the Tira hills to capture a man whom they would keep imprisoned until the original victim had either died or recovered. In the first case the Tira prisoner would be killed, in the second his people would have to ransom him from chief Kepi for twenty goats. In judging these and similar statements of the Otoro, we must discount their tendency to exaggerate the power of their régime. It forms part of that 'biased' group ideology of which we have spoken before. If it expresses itself, in other contexts, in the elaboration of the moral or martial qualities of one's own group and the disparagement of other, alien groups, it is focused here upon chieftainship, which has become the epitome of Otoro tribal existence. Kepi has already become an almost mythical figure. To relate (or add to) the stories surrounding his life is to share in a reflected glamour. The memory of Kepi may be a stronger integrative force than were his actual feats. Whether true or not, the tradition of his life becomes the ideological nucleus of the new-born tribal consciousness.

One phase, at least, in the unification of the Otoro tribe under Kepi we can trace with fair accuracy. The following facts were confirmed by informants from Urila, Kujur, and Karindi. The people of Kujur hill, who had suffered continual raids from Urila, appealed to Kepi to restrain their aggressors. They bought his protection with an annual tribute of animals, which was known as *kwelena kyoro*, the 'Chief's Wealth.' The tribute was collected by the local *kweleny*, who kept part of it. The evolution of tribal chieftainship thus also strengthened and defined more clearly the position of the local leader, investing him with the new office of representative of the central authority (though it never regularised succession to this office, e.g. made it hereditary). A similar tribute to ensure peace is said to have been paid by Karindi hill to Kepi in Chungur. Urila, on the other hand, had obtained Kepi's acquiescence to its attacks on the other groups, not by any tribute, but owing to the fact that its *kweleny* at the time of Kepi was a powerful rain-maker, on whose help Chungur depended. Orombe, too, was exempted from tributes to Chungur—on the grounds that it was the ancestral home of the royal house of Otoro.

Tribal chieftainship was gradually assuming certain economic prerogatives. There was, first, the regular tribute from communities which had 'bought' peace (including the—perhaps problematic—collective fines from Tira). There were, further, the property and livestock seized as penalties in the areas which had accepted the chief's law. The chief was, besides, entitled to appropriate any stray animal found on his territory. Finally, he would receive occasional gifts of beer, tobacco, and animals from individuals or a local *kweleny* as expression of their loyalty. These

voluntary tributes still obtain under modern Government chieftainship.[1]

The history of Otoro chieftainship after Kepi is especially interesting, as it reveals the various factors—traditional and modern—which play a part in the election and appointment of tribal chiefs. Kepi, like Tula before him, designated his successor. He chose his second son, Sabun, considering his eldest son unsuitable. The people accepted his decision, and Sabun became chief of Otoro immediately after his father's death. Sabun's successor, Arat, died after a short rule. He had a bad reputation, being quarrelsome and overbearing. After his death his three brothers, Abat, Tbirra, and Gyaur, offered themselves as successors to the Government. The fourth brother, Brigi, a poor man without name, could not think of competing. Abat and Gyaur were generally disliked; they were 'bad men', conceited and cruel. Had they been appointed as chiefs, the people would have disobeyed them, ignored their appointment, and elected another chief. Tbirra, the third candidate, was 'half good, half bad', and would have been elected by the people if the Administration had not backed another candidate, Arno. Everyone agreed that Arno was by far the best man. Yet his youth (he was about thirty at the time), his poverty, and the fact that he was only a brother-son and not, like the other candidates, a brother of the late chief, would have disqualified him in the eyes of the people. They give you a rather romantic description of how young Arno first appeared before the *Manur* at Heiban, shy, all naked, while his wealthy uncles turned up in gorgeous Arab gowns; how he succeeded in the task first entrusted to him, collection of tax, but was still afraid of the jealousy of his rivals, who might have caused his illness or death by witchcraft. Eventually public opinion rallied completely round the new Government chief. Arno performed a big ceremony to celebrate his formal accession, to which he invited his uncles. They readily gave him their (slightly left-handed) blessing. They assured him that it was all right: 'After all, it was not your fault that the *Hakuma* wanted you and not us. But never mind. All benefits which you will reap, wealth and food, will be ours also.'

We can already formulate a few rules governing succession in this young institution of tribal chieftainship. Like ordinary inheritance, the inheritance of the chiefly office is not rigid. It tends to go to brothers if there are only young sons, i.e. it goes with the inherited wealth. But apart from age and wealth, a pleasing character is an essential qualification, and public opinion is of decisive influence in this respect. The counterweight of public opinion to hereditary claims follows logically from the conception of a purely secular chieftainship, deriving its power from the large following which it could command and devoted primarily to the maintenance of peace.

The people remember five 'small chiefs' at the time of Kepi: one each

[1] When the present Otoro chief performed the cicatrization rite various people in Kujur and Urila presented him with tobacco and beer. One of the sub-chiefs of Kujur, for example, sent five pots of beer.

in Orombe, Karindi, Urila, Kujur-Nworre, and Kujur-Karro. The number of local chiefs to-day is much larger. I counted twenty sub-chiefs (*Sheikhs* and their deputies, *Wakils*). This large increase reflects partly the movements and spreading of the population, the growth of old and the foundation of new settlements, but partly also the new conception of this office as an appointed, permanent headship over well-defined areas. The whole territory of the tribe is divided into small districts of roughly equal size, each under a *Sheikh* or *Wakil*. That such a clear-cut, almost bureaucratic division could evolve so easily is due to the existence of a traditional system of regional division which, as we have seen, was based on the age-grade organization.[1] Modern local chieftainship has thus its roots less in the old political leadership, with its changing chance allegiances, than in a deeper stratum of communal life. Paradoxically, culture change has brought forth a new political system which is more intimately linked with the social structure of the community than the old system had been. Though the official tasks of *Sheikhs* and *Wakils* are largely new and unrelated to the traditional life of the group, the system of their appointment, spontaneously evolved by the people, remains true to the essential identity of the community as a unit bound together by common life.

No other features of the traditional culture have been embodied in this modern chieftainship. Only one of the Otoro sub-chiefs holds a religious office as well (*Sheikh* Karim of Kujur-Nworre, who is also the local grain priest). The *Sheikh* of Urila, Gyarge, is the son of the rain-maker and has himself for a time acted as such; but his magic failed, and he ceded the religious office to his younger brother. In the new as in the old system of chieftainship clans play no part. Although most of the chiefs (not all) belong to different clans, this distribution is accidental and there is no conscious thought of having all the various clans, or even the more important clans, represented among chiefs and sub-chiefs.

In one respect, finally, modern tribal chieftainship differs fundamentally from the traditional system of tribal organization. Strangers who settled in Otoro became full members of the tribe. The Tira clans in Otoro had severed their tribal and clan links with Tira to the extent of fighting, in the intertribal wars, on the side of their country of adoption. If, in those days, Otoro men had emigrated to other tribes (though there is no evidence of this), they would undoubtedly have similarly joined the other groups. But emigrants from Otoro who settled in Tira during the last few years have remained subjects of the Otoro chief. Though

[1] As mentioned already the correspondence is not complete. In certain localities (e.g. south Chungur) we find a larger number of sub-chiefs than is warranted by the size of the groups (and the number of local age-grade organizations). Frequent movements make a constant adjustment necessary, which is more easily achieved with regard to sub-chiefs than to the inert age-grade system. The distinction between *Sheikhs* and *Wakils*, finally, is not always strictly observed. The hill communities of Urila, Karindi, and Medka-Kodi have each a *Sheikh* and *Wakil*; Orombe has two *Sheikhs*; the twin hills of Kujur with Kujama have three *Sheikhs* and two *Wakils*, and the twin hills of Chungur seven *Sheikhs* and *Wakils*.

their land is in Tira, their life with Tira communities, they pay their taxes to Otoro. The fiscal aspect is foremost in the minds of the people. '*Mek* Arno would never permit his people to pay tax elsewhere', they say. But with this abandonment of the territorial basis of group membership a new concept of allegiance is taking shape; to be the member of a group (tribe or community) meant formerly one thing: to be of the group, live within it and under its protection. When the main attribute of traditional sovereignty, the guarantee of peace, lost its meaning, this realistic definition of group membership disappeared also. It is giving way to a new, abstract, and limitless allegiance based on tribal—'national'—origin. Migrations may still cause settlements and communities to grow and spread. Tribes, it appears, will no longer grow by incorporating immigrant groups and moulding them into segments of their own unit.

Conclusion

It is inevitable that in a comparative study like ours the individualities of the groups and cultures tend to get blurred. Let me, then, recall the main features, the differences and resemblances, of the two cultures and attempt to build up, from these features, a picture of their individualities. The picture will be incomplete; the omission from this discussion of one large field of culture, religion, alone would make it so. But it may be useful even to draw the outline shape and to sketch in a few details, for a future study to fill in, complete, and, perhaps, correct.

The cultures just described rest on a common foundation of kinship and clan structure. Above this basic identity they are separated by three far-reaching divergences. Two represent differences in social structure: the complete and incomplete adoption of the wife into the husband's clan in Otoro and Heiban respectively, and the existence of age-grades in Otoro, and their absence in Heiban. The third is a divergence of historical accident—the emergence of tribal chieftainship in Otoro, which development Heiban did not share.

The structural differences extend their influence over a wide range of interdependent traits, each adding a line, a colour spot, to the picture of cultural individuality. Complete clan-adoption of wives connotes a more rigid attitude towards marriage and remarriage; simplified kinship ties; yet also, by way of reaction, greater emphasis of maternal affiliation. Incomplete adoption, marriage by capture, and an almost apprehensive insistence on fecundity. The age-grades cultivate that spirit of sportsmanship which prevents the fight over a woman in Otoro from becoming the realistic, brutal aggression which it is in Heiban. They foster an ideal of manhood which places, above economic success, pride in courage and endurance. They create a framework for social promotion and so implant the powerful incentive of ambition. Thus Otoro society appears more purposefully orientated, and individual life more concentrated upon

a conscious plan; while in Heiban this plan of life is more erratic and its values are more uncertain.

There are other divergences between the two groups, more subtle, and psychological rather than social, which may at first sight seem unrelated with the structural differences. Thus we meet, in Otoro, with an attempt to achieve social equality of the sexes. Sex relations are restrained; and so are feuds, which are governed by an equitable code. In Heiban we note the striking, and strikingly overt, preoccupation with sex. Again, this tribe shows a marked streak of violence and uncontrolled passion. This is shown in the large number of murders and cases of manslaughter. It is shown also in the deeply upsetting effect of family quarrels, especially among the women. Often, when they have quarrelled with their husbands, they rush from their houses like women demented, and wander aimlessly for days in the hills without food or water, until friends or relations find them and take them home. This uncontrolled passion reveals itself finally in a field not hitherto explored—the incidence of suicide.[1]

Both in Heiban and Otoro suicides are frequent, but the reasons differ significantly in the two tribes. I recorded five cases in Otoro (in a sixth the reason was unknown). In two cases the reason was incurable disease. One woman, an incorrigible petty thief, attempted suicide when she learned that the enraged villagers planned to attack her. A widow hanged herself because she hated the brother of her late husband whom she was expected to marry; another woman, because her husband treated her badly and her family refused to stand by her when she decided to leave her husband. All cases, then, were conscious escapes, three from a rigid social system or its sanctions, and nearly all from a prolonged state of depression or fear.

In Heiban I recorded seven cases. They, too, were 'escapes', as much as any suicide is an escape—from a society into which one fails to fit or a life one can no longer bear. But they were, with one exception, not the final act in a prolonged maladjustment; they followed upon a violent quarrel or some other upsetting incident, and so were reactions from a sudden shock, the results of a momentary impulse. Characteristically, sex looms largely among the reasons for suicide in Heiban. One woman killed herself because she had committed incest (adultery with her husband's brother) and this was preying on her mind. A young man shot himself for a similar reason (he had committed adultery with his father-brother's wife); he did so after a beer party at which people were accusing him of the crime. Two women killed themselves immediately

[1] In this as in the subsequent descriptions of suicide among the Nuba the numerical data which I can give fall far short of ordinary statistical standards. Needless to add, the data could be obtained only through personal inquiry. The inquiry was patient and as exhaustive as conditions would allow. If the results are often meagre, this was mainly due to the shortness of memory among informants. But the vagueness of memory was made good by a positive knowledge of the general position; for never did I encounter vagueness when it came to stating whether suicide occurred or not, and was frequent or rare.

after a quarrel with their husbands—one of them ran from the house, into the hills, and threw herself from a rock. One man shot himself when his wife accused him of having killed his own son by witchcraft. Another man, when he was shamed in public by being ridiculed for not having found a wife. One man, finally, when his wife spread the fact that he was impotent.

The culture of Heiban is a fear-ridden culture. Disaster and ill-luck lurk everywhere. Let me quote a few typical examples from the religious beliefs and superstitions of the tribe, where such traits would reveal themselves most clearly. Both the Otoro and Heiban practise the custom of testing the milk of young mothers before they may nurse the new-born infant. Now in Otoro a simple magic treatment by an 'expert' is all that is needed to ensure that the milk is wholesome, and often the treatment is applied only when the milk has in fact proved 'bad'. The Heiban people assume that the milk must be bad—and much more dangerous than it can ever be in Otoro—and a long and complicated magic procedure is applied in every case. Again, in Heiban the fear of the spirits of the dead is ever-present; they are remembered in every ritual, whatever its purpose. In Otoro, the funeral rites allay all fears of the dead; consequently, the purification rites after blood feuds terminate all avoidances. In Heiban, the *tabu* of beer-drinking and the threat of leprosy linked with the blood feud never lapse.

Then there is the fear that the fertility of the land might suddenly cease if one of the numerous seasonal avoidances were broken, if blood were spilt on the ground, or if whistling or shouting were heard in the growing corn. A certain magic, mysteriously appearing in individuals, causes the death or illness of anyone who eats their grain or spills their beer. Even spectacular success, wealth too quickly won, is suspect; for it is the work of a spirit-double, who steals grain or livestock for his human twin. This universe full of malignant forces is reflected in a bewildering array of rituals, fixed and occasional, which mark almost every activity of tribal life. The rituals are intricate and overloaded with details: every plant commands its special symbolic gesture, every season its ritual procedure. The very intricacy of these rules gives birth to another fear: for a mistake, an unintentional oversight, will frustrate the ritual.

I will go no further in this outline. A neurotic mentality, emphasis on sex, violence, an all-pervading fear, and an all-pervading ritualism are, to the psychologist, traits which fall into a unitary pattern. Nor will this pattern be found to be unrelated with the structural characteristics peculiar to the society—with the absence of a system regulating adolescence, and so canalizing aggressive impulses and shaping aims of life; with the conviction of sex inequality; and with the incomplete solution of the question of partnership in marriage. To trace these links and to unravel the causal nexus is a task which goes beyond the scope of the present study.

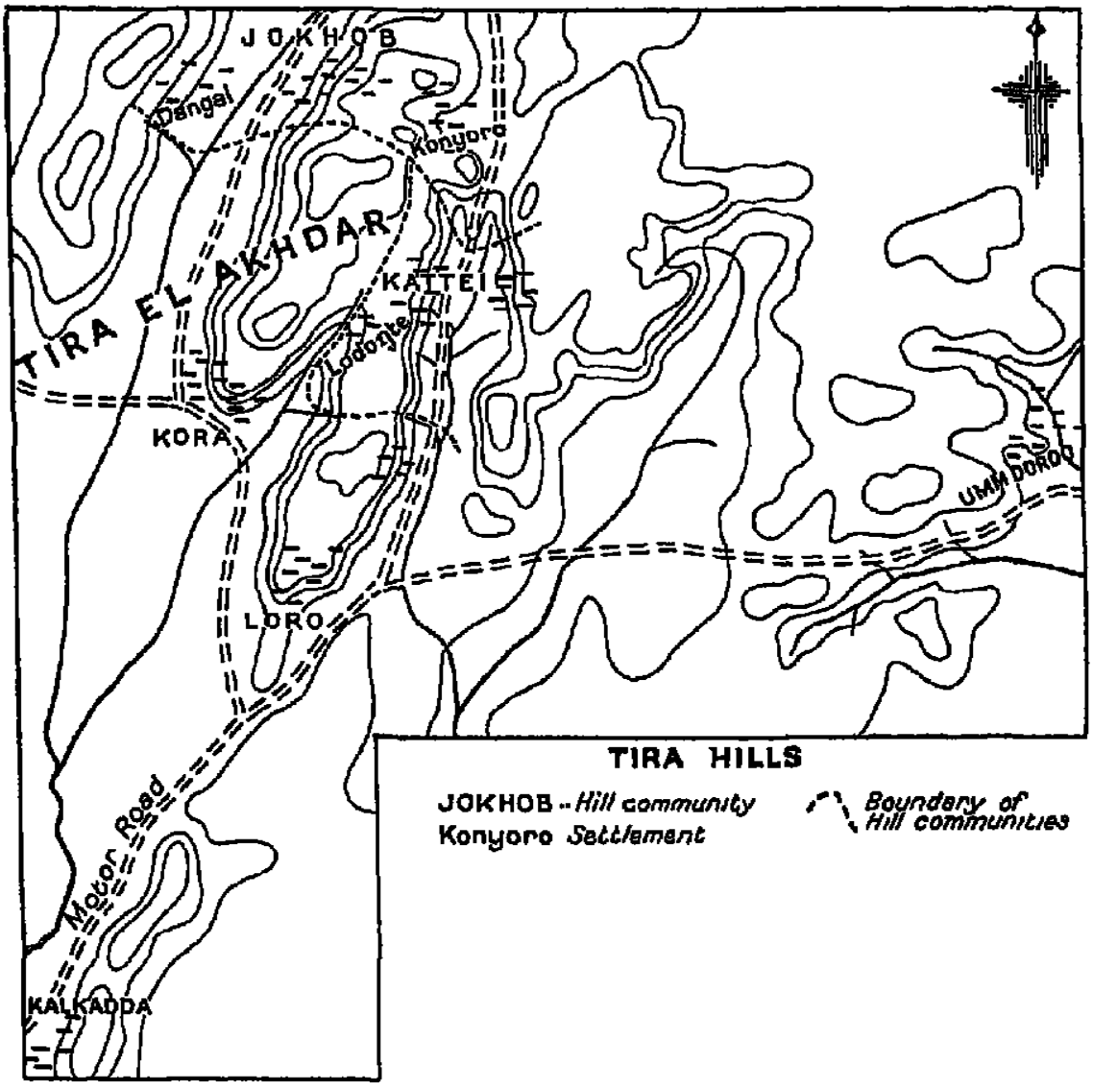
One final point needs clarifying. From our comparison, it would appear that of the two societies one is more purposefully functioning and more harmoniously adjusted than the other. This may seem belied by the fact that suicide, a symptom of stress and instability, is frequent in both (though with different motive). In reality, this is no contradiction. In contrasting the harmony and purpose of one society with the violence and discord of the other we are attempting to name embracing aspects of culture, its spirit or genius, to which all individual motives appear subordinated. If suicide reflects (as is here assumed) the emotional instability of the ill-adjusted individual, it may occur as logically in the more harmonious society as in the more discordant one. In the former, because the balance of the society exacts from the individual the greater restraint and the more rigorous conformity; in the latter, because here the individual has been habituated to violent impulses and reactions. The stress from which suicide may spring is thus differently placed—between the individual and a society intolerant of deviations and failures, and within the habitual attitude of the individual. Otoro presents the former, Heiban the latter picture. That the social motivation of suicide is not always ambivalent (to borrow a Freudian term) will be shown in later chapters.

CHAPTER VI

TIRA AND MORO

People and Country

THE Tira hills lie east of Otoro, across the narrow valley of the Kauda river. They are for the most part low, bare hills, which rise in the west to the high rocky ridge of Tira el Akhdar and peter out in low hillocks in the south and east. The Tira tribe is scattered over a wide area—wider than this hill range and its valleys. The majority of the tribe (which numbers perhaps 8,000) is concentrated round Tira

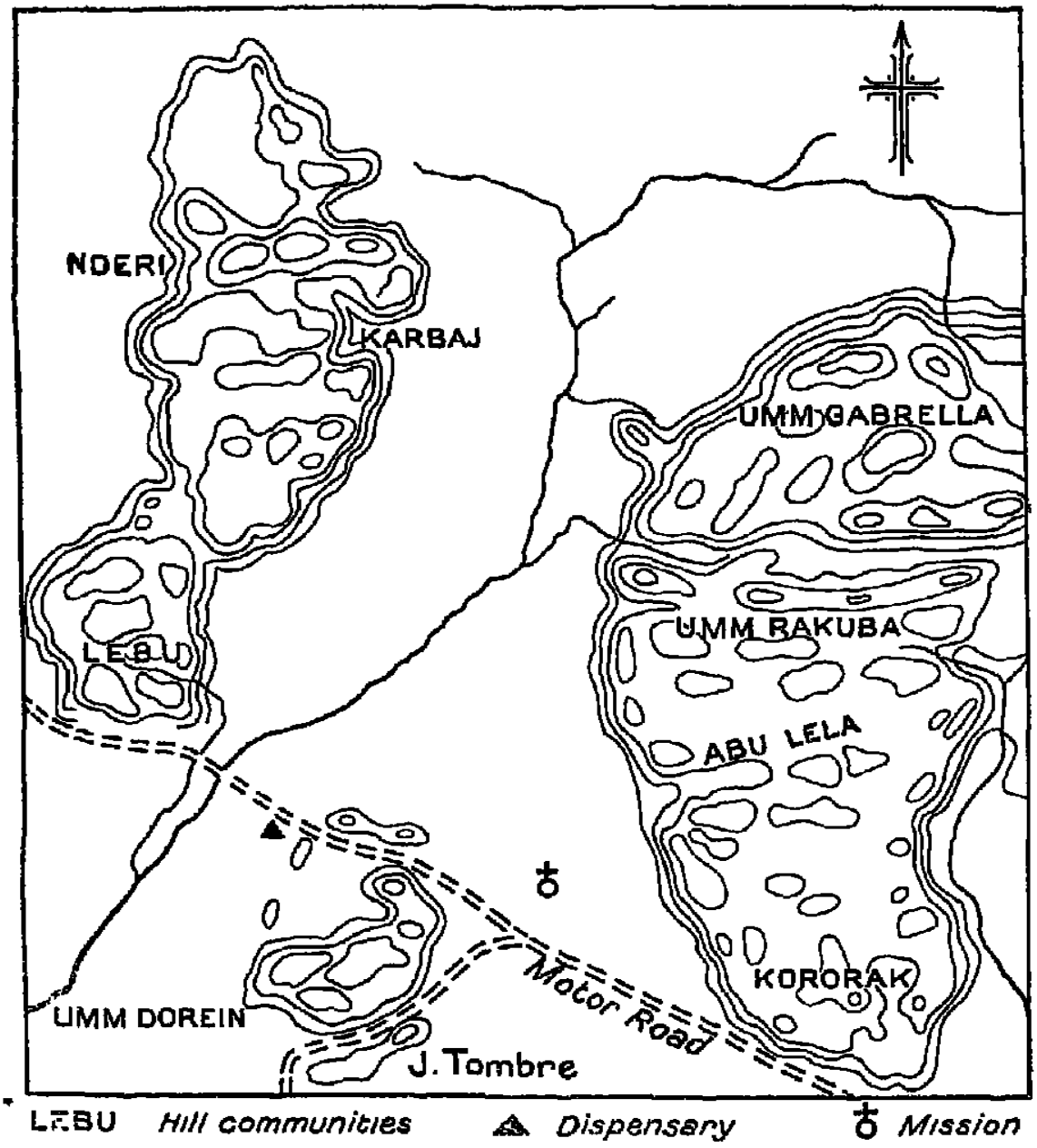


el Akhdar; an eastern outpost of the tribe is at Umm Dordo, separated from the main range by five miles of uninhabited country; a southern outpost at Tira Mande, in the plain, another five or six miles from the southern foothills of the Tira massif; a final group of Tira lives some ten miles to the south-west, on Tira Lomon, the eastern edge of the Kindirma Plateau.

According to their traditions, the Tira people (who call themselves

Ltira) came originally from a place called Rila, said to have been situated between Sheibun and Kadugli (I have been unable to identify this place). They left for unknown reasons to settle on Tombore hill, in the Moro massif. This tradition is corroborated by the Moro, who still remember that Tombore or Tombre, a low foothill of the Umm Dorein chain, was inhabited by Tira (whom they called Ltirri) at the time when

MORO HILLS



the Moro first settled in that region. Driven from Tombore by the Arabs, the Tira migrated east, a few groups to Tira Lomon, the rest to Tira el Akhdar. This final migration took place only three generations ago; the grandfathers of men who are now sixty or seventy still lived and died in Tombore. There is also a vague tradition that when the fathers and grandfathers of the present generation arrived in Tira they found there already three Tira clans living, speaking the language of the

immigrants and possessing an identical culture. Nothing is known about their past or origin, except that they have 'always' lived where the immigrants from Tombore found them: two clans, Lgopa and Dangal, on the west flank of Tira el Akhdar and on a low foothill, called Ardhan, and a third clan, Loghoro, on the hill now known as Loro.

The immigrants first settled on Ardhan hill, but abandoned it later again for the high main range, according to some because on the low hill they were too exposed to raids from Arabs and Otoro, according to others because Ardhan proved an unlucky (possibly malarial) place, where large numbers of people died. In the course of time the Tira were joined by two alien groups (of Arab origin, as some say) which had fled from the Dervish raiders into the safety of the Tira hills. They came from distant villages, Oriyo in the east and Kgen in the north. They adopted Tira language and adjusted their culture to that of the group among which they were living and into whose tribal unit they were incorporated as new clans. Like the Otoro clans of alien origin, these two groups bear the names of their original home as clan names—Loriyo and Lgegen.

When the present Government was established, the people up in the fastness of Tira el Akhdar proved unmanageable. They carried on tribal warfare unimpressed by the *pax Britannica*; they carried off livestock and slaves, and even raided police posts and Government convoys. The Government retaliated with punitive expeditions and finally with the forcible evacuation of the tribe from its impregnable mountain retreat. The Tira were made to settle in the valleys which surround the main range and on the foothills of Kalkadda, Ardhan, and Umm Dordo. Some groups, which had settled on Ardhan hill of evil reputation, were clamouring to be allowed to return to the high hills. In 1930, when the pacification of the country seemed sufficiently secure, they were granted permission. But only a few old men moved again up to the mountain ridge; the rest were content to leave the hated site, and built themselves new homesteads on the lower reaches of the mountain or moved to the settlements which had grown up in the valley.

To-day the Tira occupy six 'hills' (*ain*) in Tira proper (eight including Tira Mande and Tira Lomon, which we shall largely disregard in the following): Gabri, Kummu, Kattei, Ngadhado, Kalkadda, and Ndorndo. The first four 'hills', which form part of the Tira el Akhdar range, are the hills which the tribe had occupied since pre-British days; the settlements at Kalkadda and Ndorndo (also Mande) were founded already under British rule. The different hill communities are mostly referred to to-day by Arabic names or the names of the main settlements, which are also the seats of the local sub-chiefs. Thus Gabri is known as Kora, Kummu as Jokhob (Arabic for 'gorge', 'valley'), Ngadhado as Loro, and Ndorndo as Umm Dordo.[1]

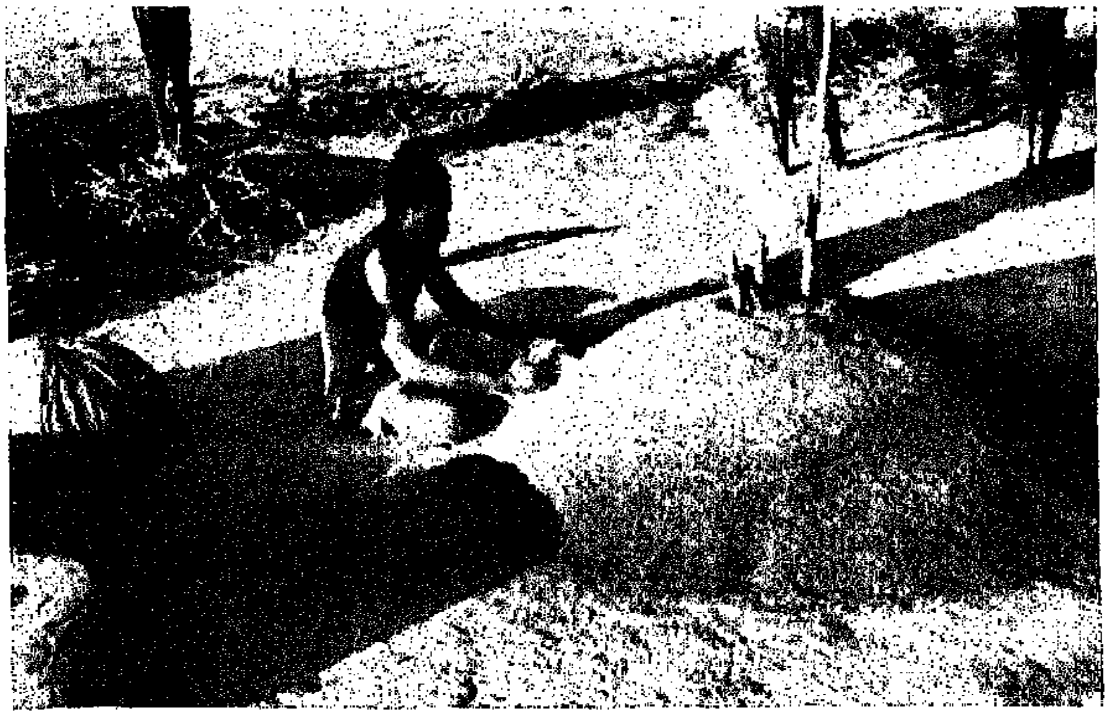
[1] Umm Dordo is an Arabic distortion of the Tira name *ndordo*, which means 'back', 'behind'.

The Moro people, about 20,000 strong, live on two high mountain massifs which face each other, east and west, across a broad, fertile plain, and a third, lower hill between and slightly to the south of these two ranges. This is the tradition most commonly accepted about the past of the tribe. The ancient home of the Moro people was on Lebu hill, in the western massif, called Elmoroŋ in the vernacular. Growing too numerous, the tribe overflowed to other areas and split into three sections: one remained in Lebu; the second moved to the northern edge of the massif, called Kain (also known as Karbaj); the third migrated to a low hill chain south of the western massif called Orein. The last section soon afterwards abandoned this site, which had proved arid, and moved east to its present hill. The name of the hill was Gorban, and the people living on it call themselves Logorban; but the name of their previous domicile also followed them to the new place, which became known to the Arabs as Umm Dorein.[1]

At that time the eastern hill massif was uninhabited. Three or four generations ago the Moro began to settle there: people from Umm Dorein in Kororak (Loghare in the vernacular), from Lebu in Kororak, Abu Leila (Lemoró) and Umm Rakuba (Lupundri), and people from Karbaj in Umm Gabrella (Tobrella). This migration, which continued under the present Government, was prompted by the pressure of population and the search for new land, better protected from Arab raiders. The father of the present Paramount Chief of Moro, for example, had for this reason emigrated from Umm Dorein to Kororak towards the end of the Mahdist régime. When the effects of British rule became visible, and wide tracts of land in the plain were thrown open to the people, he returned again to Umm Dorein. About seven years ago a new trend of emigration started; people from Kororak settled on the sparsely populated hill massif of Tabuli, and a few families from Lebu moved into the plain to the west of their hill, again in search of fertile land.

The modern tribal name of the Moro people was given them by their Arab neighbours, to whom the Moro became known by the name of their ancient home, the hill of Elmoroŋ (or Lebu). The Moro have no collective tribal name for themselves, but refer to their various local sections by the names of the different hills which they inhabit. To them, Elmoroŋ is only the name of the one tribal section living at Lebu, as Logorban is the name of the group at Umm Dorein, Lemoró that of the people at Abu Leila, and so forth. But to the other tribes in that area the Moro are again known by a collective tribal name; the Mesakin, Korongo, and other groups to the south and west know them as Mra, the Otoro as Ledora, and the Tira as Lemore. It is interesting to note

[1] Another tradition gives the Moro tribe two original sections, on the hills of Lebu and Kain, with Umm Dorein again as the offshoot of Lebu. Either tradition fails to account for the inhabitants of the third hill in the western massif, Ndere. The people of Ndere are described as having 'always been there' and having always formed a separate group, which still dissociates itself in many ways from the life of the tribe.



HARVEST RITE OVER NEWLY THRESHED GRAIN IN HEIBAN. THE STICKS STUCK INTO THE MOUND CORRESPOND TO THE 'RITUAL NUMBER' OF THE CLAN

WRESTLING TOURNAMENT IN OTORO

CEREMONY OF
'FILLING THE GRANARY'
IN HEIBAN
PAINTING THE GRANARY

BRIDAL PROCESSION
IN OTORO THE GIRLS
CARRY VARIOUS
ITEMS OF THE DOWRY,
AMONG THEM THE
BRIDE'S PLANK BED

that this last name, Lemore, is also the name which the Otoro and Heiban peoples give to the Tira; it adds to the evidence of an ancient common home of the Moro and Tira tribes.

The absence of a common tribal name in Moro seems to reflect the looseness of the social and cultural links between the different hill groups. In the religious field, especially, the various local sections of the Moro tribe show marked divergences. But we shall see that they are not cultural differences as the word is normally understood: they do not characterize the local groups as such; they are rooted primarily in different clan observances, and become cultural differences, typical of local sections, only as a result of the unequal distribution of clans over the different localities. Linguistically, the Moro tribe forms a single unit.

The small Tira tribe is closely knit, socially as well as culturally. The only cultural differences that exist are of recent origin and express the varying degree of Arab influence, which is strongest in the exposed southern outpost of Tira Mande, but has also begun to encroach upon Kalkadda and Umm Dordo.

Tira and Moro speak languages of identical type and related vocabulary; many terms referring to features of the social structure, especially, are common to both languages. In Tira, on the other hand, certain other terms of this kind are closely related to corresponding terms in Otoro language. The two 'dialects', Tira and Moro, are not mutually intelligible, nor do the two tribes realize their linguistic relationship (or did, before I pointed it out to them). Indeed, there is little intercourse between Moro and Tira, except perhaps between Moro and the Tira section in Tira Lomon. The contacts of the Tira are mainly with Otoro, Heiban, and the neighbouring Arab groups, the contacts of the Moro with Korongo and Mesakin.

The Tira also intermarry to a small extent with Otoro and Heiban, and a few Otoro families have recently settled in Kalkadda. The Moro do not intermarry with other tribes, nor have they so far as can be traced incorporated any alien individuals or groups into their tribe or communities.

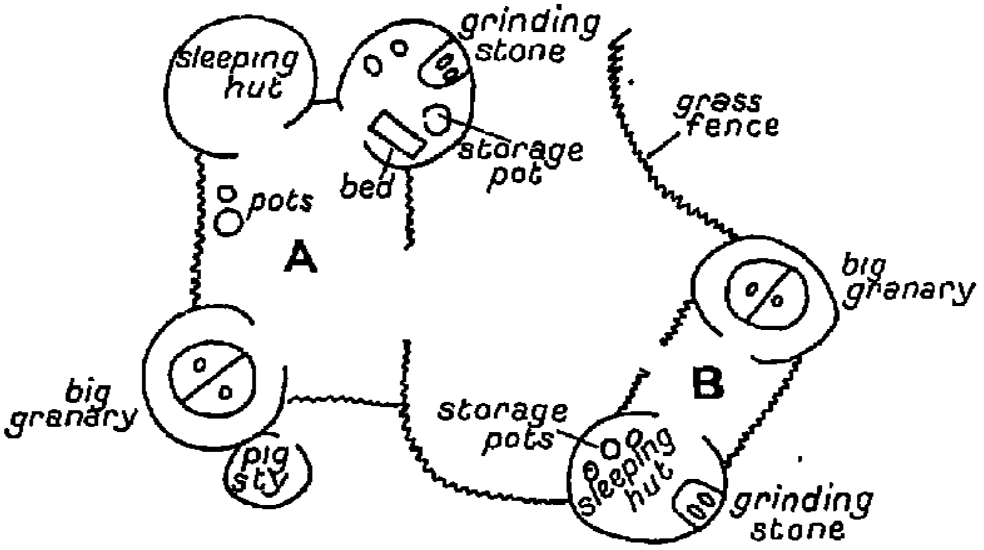
Settlement and Homestead

The Tira, like the Heiban and Otoro, live in loosely scattered, straggling settlements which are more closely concentrated into 'villages' proper only where they touch the plain (as in Kalkadda). In the Moro hills this concentration is much more marked: the spacious plateaus of Lebu or Karbaj, densely populated, have the appearance almost of large hill towns. Again we find small local communities or 'hamlets', each known by a special name, which, in their totality, form the hill communities of Tira and Moro. In Moro these hamlets are very small, and the hill community comprises a large number of these separate localities. Umm Dorein, for example, numbers eighteen 'hamlets', two of which, however, have disappeared, their population having died out or emigrated. The hamlets in Tira are slightly larger, each hill community numbering

four or five separate localities. The intermediate local group of a 'hill community within the hill community' which we discovered in Otoro does not exist in Tira. It occurs in Moro, though much less sharply defined. It does not bear a separate name, and is only visible in the arrangement of dances and, above all, in the organization of the main tribal sport, stick-fighting. For this purpose the hill community of Umm Dorein, for example, is divided into four local sections, each comprising a number of neighbouring hamlets and each producing a local team. Three of these four divisions correspond roughly to the northern, southern, and eastern flank of the hill, the fourth, less well defined, being formed by the central range, which stretches from west to east.

The typical Tira house, called *angana*, consists of two round huts

TIRA HOUSE



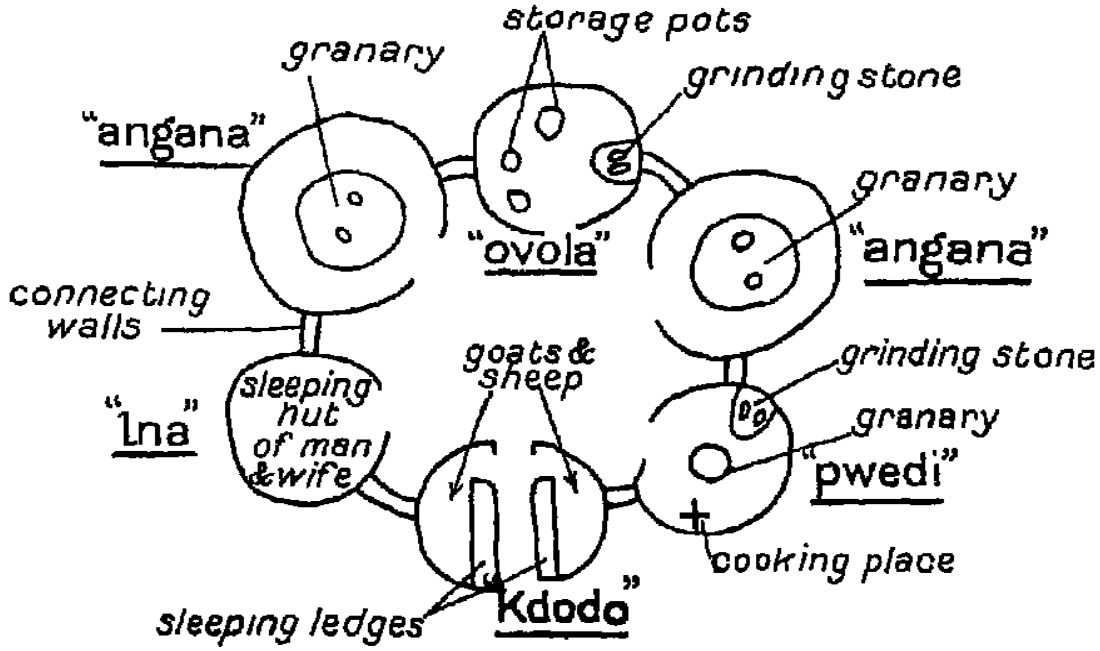
A...House of man, one wife, and two children
B...Brother of A. House of man, one wife, no children.

built of mud with the doors facing each other, and connected by a flat-topped, timber-and-wattle structure, which serves as entrance-hut and living-room. Occasionally a house is enlarged by the addition of a third hut, opening into the same entrance-'hall' or by another twin-hut structure. One of the twin-huts invariably contains the large indoor granary; the other serves as cooking and sleeping-hut. The third hut may contain grinding-stone, fireplace, a few storage pots, or a small indoor granary, and may also serve as a sleeping-hut for grown daughters. The house is mostly surrounded by a fence of wattle or grain stalks, with an outdoor granary and pigsty just outside it. The Tira house is the home of an individual family—man, wife, and children. Occasionally brothers or other close relations live in adjoining houses; sometimes, too, co-wives with their children may live together in the same house; more often, however, their husband would build a separate house for each wife. As in Otoro, bigger boys sleep in the cattle camps and girls in the special

girls' huts until they marry. But when a girl marries, her father will first build a special hut for her in his own house, for married daughters stay with their parents till after the birth of their first child, when they will move into their husband's home. Married sons build themselves a new house shortly before their wife comes to join them, not necessarily in the vicinity of their paternal home.

The Moro house is of a completely different type. It conforms to a pattern of house, common in the southern Nuba hills, which is best described as 'ring-house'. It consists of five to six round huts arranged in a ring round an open central courtyard. The whole compound is called *era*, and each hut is known by a special name. There is first the hut called *kdodo*, the entrance-hut, which has a door shaped like a keyhole

MORO HOUSE



and is divided by a passage way into two halves. Ledges projecting from the walls of the passage way serve as bedsteads for the grown up boys when they spend a night at home. Goats and sheep are also kept there during the time of the year when they are taken up to the hill to feed on the stalks of the early-maturing grain. A second hut, called *pwedi*, contains the cooking place and a small indoor granary. A third hut, *ovola*, contains the grinding-stone and storage pots. A fourth hut, *lna*, serves as sleeping-hut for husband and wife and small children during the rains, and is built with a very high floor as protection against dampness. The wife also sleeps here during her confinement. In the dry season man and wife sleep in the *pwedi* hut. Finally, there are one or two very large huts, called *angana*. They contain the big indoor granaries, the top of which serves as a sleeping-place for the bigger girls. Unlike the other huts, which have a simple conical thatch, the *angana* has an elaborate bell-shaped roof. The huts are built with thick mud walls resting on

foundations of rough masonry; stone walls connect hut with hut. Perched on steep terraces and buttressed by solid masonry, the Moro house has the appearance almost of a mountain fortress.

Again an individual family inhabits the single house. A man who has more than one wife builds a separate house for each wife. Daughters leave the paternal house when they marry. But the growing family of married sons and grandsons does not scatter as it does in Tira. Whenever it is possible, fathers and sons, or older and younger brothers, will try to live close to each other, or at least in the same locality. When a young man is about to take a wife, his father will build a new house for him close to his own—a hut or two first, which will later grow into a full-sized house. Or, if there is not sufficient space near-by, the father may surrender his own house to the newly married son and build himself another, smaller house some distance away, where he will end his days. Successive generations are thus firmly bound to the same locality.

This massing of patrilineal kin in the same locality must become visible also in the distribution of the (patrilineal) clans. Different clans appear, in fact, concentrated in different localities, perhaps overflowing to neighbouring hamlets, but absent in other parts of the hill. The identity of clan and local group is neither laid down by positive rules, nor is it complete. Yet it is close enough to lead to a certain lax use of nomenclature. The people will often use clan names when they mean localities; conversely, they will describe definite clan observances or activities (e.g. clan rituals) as being characteristic of this or that hamlet. When I began work in Moro I was for days recording information on clans under the names of what I later learned were localities, and using the term *era*, which means 'village', for a unit which from all descriptions was undoubtedly a clan.

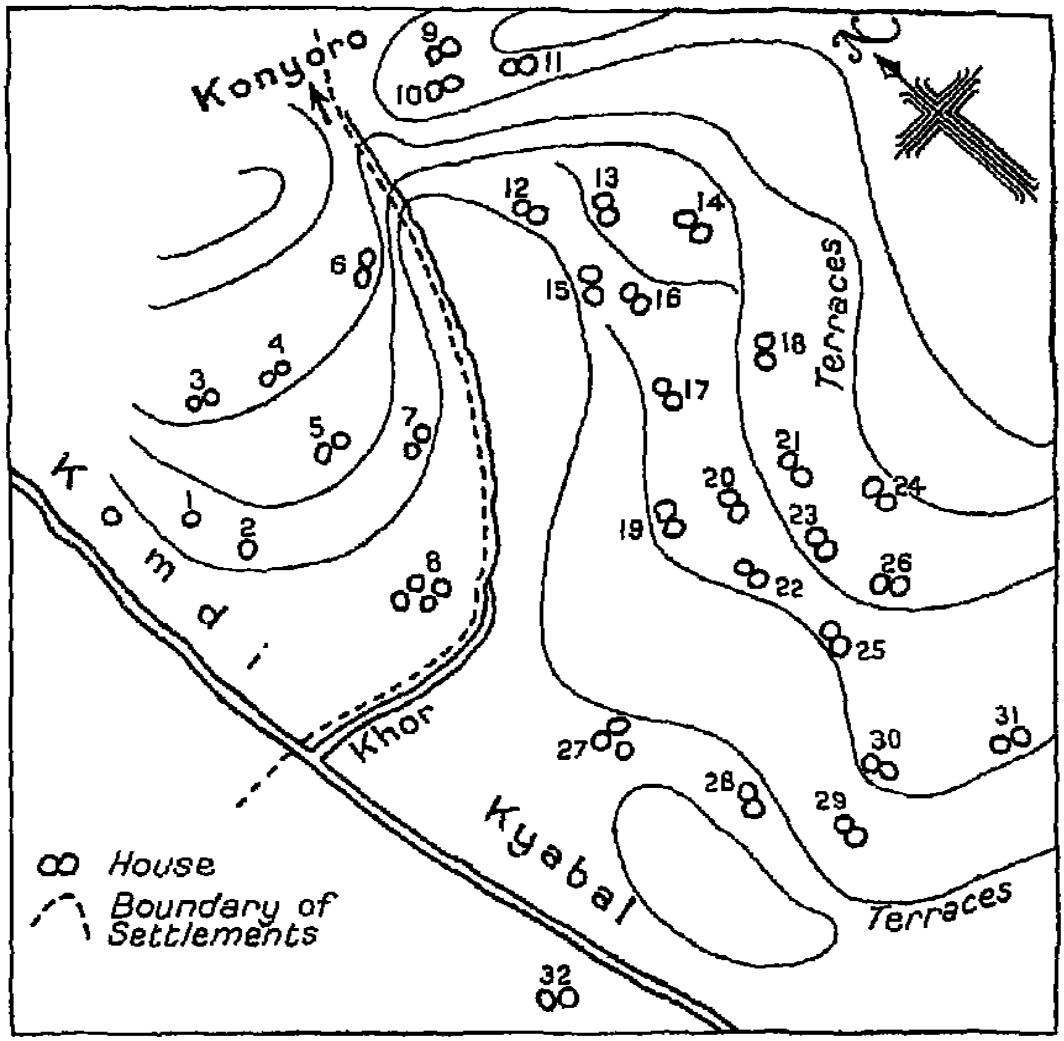
Clan

The clans in Tira and Moro are patrilineal. The Tira call the clan *iyrdo* (cp. the Otoro *eridо*), which means 'knife'—that is, as much as 'section' or 'segment'. The Moro term is *nyagar*, of uncertain etymology.

The Tira tribe numbers seventeen clans of varying size. They are on the whole irregularly distributed over villages and hill communities, though a few clans occur in one or two hill communities only. The majority of the clans bear names whose meaning cannot be identified. Four clans are known by names which are also given to certain localities: they are the two clans of alien origin, known by the name of their ancient home, and the two 'aboriginal' Tira clans which the immigrants from Tombore are said to have found living on Tira el Akhdar. The former are now scattered over the whole of Tira; the Dangal and Lgopa clans are still concentrated in the communities of the same name, though they now share them with various other clans. A few clans are known by two names. The meaning of this double nomenclature is not quite clear. In the case of the Ltngum clan, which is also known as Lver,

informants said that the first was the name of the clan proper, the second that of a hillock (no longer identifiable) on which the clan originally lived. In the case of another clan with two names, Iltobo-Herai, some informants maintained that the now customary synonymous use of the two names was wrong and that the two names refer in reality to two

TIRA SETTLEMENT IN JOKHOB



EXPLANATION

1- abandoned house, used as pigsty of 3

3 - Elder brother of 4, father of 5

8-Sheikh's house (two wives)

7-father of 15

6 and 31- brothers of 8,

27-house of widowed mother of 8

Dangal clan 2

Itumbel clan 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 32.

Ldonyo clan. 6,8,12,25,27, 28, 29, 30, 31.

Lgegen clan 18, 23, 24, 26.

originally different clans; others, however, explained the second name, Herai, as an additional name for one section of the Iltobo clan, distinguishing it from another section, Iltobo proper or (a nomenclature not generally accepted) Iltobo-Larallo. For the remaining double names I could obtain no explanation.

The following diagram illustrates the distribution of the various clans over the six hill communities of Tira. The number of asterisks against the names of the clans indicates their comparative strength in a particular locality. For two hill communities the approximate number of individual families in each clan is added.

List of Tira Clans

Clans:	*Hill communities:*					
	Kalkadda	*Loro*	*Kora*	*Kattei*	*Jokhob*	*Dordo*
1. Dangal (Lghor)	*(2)				**	
2. Iltobo (Herai)	**(42)	**	**(50)		*	*
3. Iltaro	**(30)	*		*	*	*
4. Iltiri	*(3)	**		*	*	**
5. Itumbel[1]	**(30)	**	**(30)	*	*	*
6. Larallo	*(4)	*		*		**
7. Ldonyo	*(2)	*	*(15)	*	*	**
8. Ledhero		*			*	**
9. Lgegen	*(2)		*(10)		**	**
10. Lgopa			***(100)			
11. Lgotha	*(5)			*		***
12. Logoro (Kavaja)	*(3)	**		**		
13. Loriyo	*(2)	*				*
14. Lorovan	*(6)		*(7)		*	**
15. Ltrngum (Lver)		**				
16. Lumene	*(3)		**(35)	*	*	*
17. Nuli	*(2)			*		**

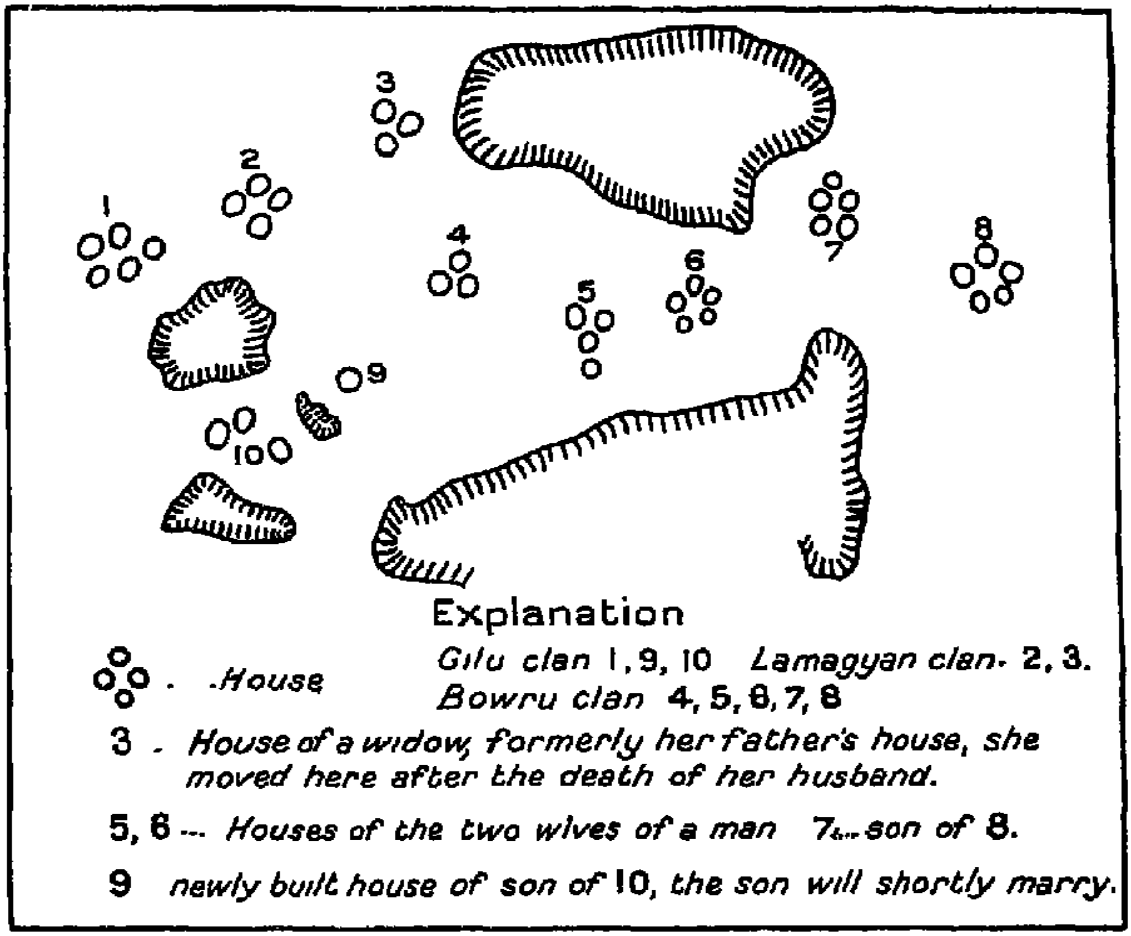
In Umm Dorein, the hill community of Moro with which we shall be largely concerned, we find seventeen different clans, again of greatly varying size. I shall list their names later, but I may mention here that only one clan bears a name which is etymologically identifiable—namely, as the name of Orein hill, which, as we remember, had been the previous domicile of the Moro section in Umm Dorein. The three hill communities of Moro, Umm Dorein, Lebu, and Karbaj, have only one or two clans in common (two Umm Dorein clans, for example, are also represented in Lebu); the rest are clans which are limited to the single hill community. The 'new' hill communities, which were founded later, share many clans both with the old hills whose offshoot they represent, and with each other. Emigrant clan sections which have left their original home several generations ago have long severed all links with the mother clans. They have lost their social identity and abandoned or forgotten many of the observances which characterize their clans in their original habitat. On Kororak hill I met individuals who could only with difficulty remember their clan *tabus*, clan magic, even their clan names. But clan sections which have emigrated comparatively recently, in the present or last generation, still

[1] One section called Ltmdu in Otoro (*see* p. 139).

maintain close contacts with their fellow clansmen in the old home. The emigrant groups may be not even regarded as separate 'sections', but as belonging to one or the other of the several clan sections into which the clan is divided in its traditional domicile.

As in Otoro, then, certain clans in Moro as well as Tira have split into sub-sections. Five of the seventeen Moro clans and five Tira clans are thus sub-divided into two to three clan sections. This development is again explained as being due to the growth and the spreading of clans,

SECTION OF MORO SETTLEMENT IN UMM DOREIN



and to lessening intercourse and familiarity, as a result of which 'distant' clan relations come to consider each other as strangers. But this explanation is not fully convincing. The sub-division is not left to the fluid criteria of personal contacts and familiarity. Unlike the Otoro, who only know of their own clan section and then, vaguely, of other, 'distant' clan relations, of whom they have 'lost track', the Tira and Moro readily enumerate the different sections of which their clans are composed. Moreover, different clan sections occur side by side in the same locality. Finally, the sub-division of clans does not affect the whole range of clan activities; it is effective, above all, in the definition of clan exogamy, and also in ritual co-operation; but it does not affect certain other clan observances—food *tabus*, the collective responsibility in blood feud and revenge, the beliefs in clan magic—which remain linked with the large,

'theoretical' clan. We must emphasize that the clan section is not reduced to a patrilineal lineage;[1] nor can it be derived from any genealogical split in the ancestry of the clan. It can be explained only as a result of the desire to widen the scope of eligible marriage connexions. It must have resulted from a lax interpretation of clan exogamy which had crept in at one time—a 'laxity', however, which was at once conventionalized and translated into clearly formulated clan rules. This tendency to frame (even originally fluid) clan practices in strict rules is typical of the sharp segmentation in the two tribes. In Tira this state of flux is even now visible. For while the genealogies show that marriages in the older generation were either exogamous or between recognized clan sections, the younger generation is marrying within the clan, into sections which are only vaguely described as 'distant', but have not yet been assigned a definite place in the schema of tribal clans and clan divisions.

If we might hesitate to call these exogamous sections 'sub-clans', the term is fully justified in the case of three of the five sub-divided Tira clans, where the sub-division is much more rigid and complete. Each of these clans has two sub-clans, which appear as separate and independent units in almost every clan activity—above all, in the field of magic and ritual. One of these 'twin' clans is Iltobo, which, as we have seen, even claims (or claimed in the past) a separate name for its sub-sections; the other two are Lumene and Itumbel. Now we shall see later that the various clan observances and forms of clan magic are largely meant to benefit the Tira tribe as a whole. A sub-division of clans which introduces new types of magic would thus enrich the magic devices of which the society can avail itself. This seems indeed to have been an additional motive behind this development. In Moro, where the different hill communities embrace, in their totality, a far larger number of clans, each with its specific ritual and magical properties, the situation did obviously not warrant a similar segmentation.

Neither Moro nor Tira know of clan-ancestors. Their memory is short, and genealogies can be traced back only three generations. Nor are there clan heads. But among the old men of the clan one or two will acquire a certain position of spiritual leadership which reflects the existence of specific forms of clan magic, wielded efficiently only by old, experienced men.

Clan magic and clan rituals are, then, the first of the rights and obligations vested in clans which, as we have put it, fulfil themselves in specific social institutions, existing 'in their own right'. They are obligations in the widest sense of the word, for the welfare of the whole tribe rests on the ritual observances and magic actions which the different clans claim as their properties. We shall see that this aspect of clan activity embraces

[1] By 'lineage' we understand a kinship group based on a concrete and unbroken pedigree, traced back (frequently through few generations) to a remembered—not mythical—common ancestor.

the whole domain of religion: there are no rituals (at least, no large-scale rites concerning the life of the whole group) outside the clan rituals, and there is no priestship outside the spiritual offices which fall to the old men of the clans.

As in Otoro and Heiban, clans are charged with the duty of collective responsibility in the case of homicide between clans. This duty is enjoined on the members of the large, 'theoretical' clan, and not on its sub-sections.

Finally, clans, or clan sections, are exogamous. The prohibition is meant to apply equally to sexual relations. In neither case does one conceive of supernatural sanctions. The absence of other than disciplinary measures to enforce the marriage *tabu* may explain how originally exogamous clans could so easily split up into sections allowed to intermarry. Formerly, the Tira claim, a young man who was determined to marry a girl of his own clan or clan section would be beaten by his father till he abandoned his unorthodox plan. But clearly some of these juvenile reformers must have remained obdurate, thus initiating the new marriage connexions which were to lead eventually to the recognized sub-division of the clan. The disabilities resulting from this departure from the traditional rules were indirect, and themselves furthered this progressive segmentation. For they implied eating avoidances between the new in-laws which, running counter to the absence of such avoidances within the clans, must split the clan into sections between which this social intercourse was forbidden.

This conclusion applies only to Tira; for only here do we meet with the eating avoidances between clans. They concern meat and corn gruel, and are valid for the large, 'theoretical' clan. The Moro know of no such avoidances. This does not mean that in Moro the separation of clans is less sharp or their internal integration weaker. Rather are separation and integration sustained by different factors in the two tribes (e.g. the stronger local unity in Moro), as also the 'formal' clan observances are derived from different fields of conduct.

Among the rights and obligations designed to express the unity and identity of the clan we find, in Tira, the familiar 'symbolic' observances of the ritual direction, the ritual fat and ritual numbers, which play a part in the first-fruit rites (called here *dhuprekyo*), and the clan-bound differences in the ritual shaving of the hair of new-born children (called *amudhe*). The scale of this last ceremony also varies with the clan. In six Tira clans the young mother, too, has her hair shaved on this occasion, having let it grow from the beginning of her pregnancy. The meaning of the 'ritual number' is extended so as to define also the period during which the young mother must stay indoors after birth. The 'ritual directions' are less varied than in Otoro or Heiban. Referring again to the traditional home of the clans, they mark distinctions only between the 'aboriginal' clans of Tira el Akhdar, the clans said to have immigrated from Tombore, and the two small clans of alien origin. Thus all Tombore clans face south-west in their ritual acts, and bury their dead with their heads

pointing in that direction; the ritual direction of the Dangal clan is towards Ardhan hill, of the Lgopa clan towards the main range of Tira el Akhdar, of Loghoro towards the east (Loro hill), of Lgegen towards north (where Kgen lies), and of Loriyo east again, towards the ancient clan home beyond Umm Dordo.

To these clan observances we must add two new groups of clan rules. The first lays down that menstruating girls and women must refrain from preparing food or fetching water, and must sleep alone, in a separate hut, for seven days. But there is no sanction for the infringement of this rule. This observance, moreover, exists only in two Tira clans, Itumbel and Iltiri, and bears no relation to any of the other observances or magic properties typical of these clans.[1] Whatever its origin, it has to-day merely the significance of a clan symbol which, on a limited scale, contributes towards defining the individuality of clans.

The second group of rules, which apply to every Tira clan, comprises clan food *tabus*. The different clans are forbidden to eat the flesh of certain animals (squirrel, wild cat, a certain bird, &c.), lest they be punished with grave illness—blindness, or a crippling disease which 'breaks the limbs'.[2] The killing as such of the animal does not entail this supernatural sanction. If you happen to kill a forbidden animal inadvertently, you will leave it without touching the body and inform a man from another clan, not bound by your *tabus*, so that he may take it away and eat it. The animal must not be cooked close to your house, for should the smoke from the fire enter your nostrils, it would have the same effect as eating the forbidden flesh. Persons who sinned against the food *tabu*—for example, young boys who have broken it through ignorance—can be saved from the disastrous effects by a timely purification rite, in which they are made to inhale either the smoke from the ritual fat of their clan or (in some clans) smoke from some burnt hair of the *tabu* animal. The punishment for a breach of the food *tabu* afflicts only the guilty individual, and not his relations as well. Similarly, the cure is effective only within the particular clan and in the case of the one transgressor of the clan laws; it is not conceived of as a general treatment of (say) blindness or infantile paralysis. The food *tabus* are in no way a concern of the tribe at large. Let me emphasize that they have no significance beyond that of 'diacritical' clan symbols. They have no bearing on other aspects of clan life. Like the ritual direction or the ritual numbers, the food *tabus* represent what I have called 'formal' differences of behaviour, and 'formal' variations of common habits (food habits). The tribe as such, too, observes certain food rules. These have no ritual or

[1] We shall see that menstruation observances play a considerable part in the Moro clan rules.

[2] Two cripples who were pointed out to me in Tira and Moro as instances of the effects of this magic were both victims of infantile paralysis. One of the two men, incidentally, denied ever having broken the *tabu*, to which my informants merely said: 'Obviously, he would not admit it.' The other frankly admitted that he had eaten chicken, which is *tabu* in his clan.

magic significance, but are merely food idiosyncrasies, which are, moreover, common to nearly all Nuba tribes. Thus the Tira (and similarly Heiban, Otoro, Moro, and other groups) do not eat the flesh of horses, mules, dogs, hyenas, frogs; nor do they eat ants or snakes (save the python, which is considered a great delicacy).[1] To the list of these common avoidances, then, the members of an individual clan add another item. But the clan food *tabu* is not as such sufficient to define the identity of the clan. Four animals, squirrel, wild cat, honey-badger and a certain tiny, long-tailed bird, are made to do for fifteen out of the seventeen Tira clans. What counts is the combination of all the various clan observances. Four examples will be sufficient to illustrate this schema of permutation:

Iltobo clan (sub-clan II): Ritual fat, he-goat; ritual number, twice five; age of child in *amudhe* ritual, three to four; small-scale ritual; food *tabu*, wild cat.

Ledhero clan: Ritual fat, ram; ritual number, twice five; age of child in *amudhe* ritual, three to four; large-scale ritual; food *tabu*, squirrel.

Ldonyo clan: Ritual fat, he-goat; ritual number, twice four; age of child in *amudhe* ritual, one to two; small-scale ritual; food *tabu*, wild cat.

Lgegen clan: Ritual fat, he-goat; ritual number, twice four; age of child in *amudhe* ritual, three to four; large-scale ritual; food *tabu*, honey-badger.

But to these 'formal' food rules we must add another food *tabu* of much deeper significance. It forbids the killing as well as the eating of the animal, and the breaking of the *tabu* or the disregard of other ritual rules associated with the *tabu* animal would involve a disaster for the whole tribe. Unlike the animals which fall under the 'formal' *tabu*, which are of no particular significance in the economic or general life of the group, these animals, their preservation or control, are of paramount importance. One is a domestic animal—the goat: the Ldonyo people must not eat or kill young she-goats which have not yet given birth, nor may they drink goats' milk, else all domestic animals of the tribe which are in milk will die. Three others are predatory animals: the Larallo clan must never kill leopards, or else some of their own clansmen would die; the Iltiri clan must never kill or eat snakes (including the python), lest the specific magic of this clan, which keeps poisonous snakes in check and cures snake bite, lose power; and one section of Iltobo (which we will call Iltobo I) is forbidden to kill lions. In the case of the predatory animals, the connexion between clan and animal goes even deeper and gains totemic significance. The leopard is described as the 'brother' of the Larallo clan; he would never attack a Larallo man, but would visit his house as a friend, without doing damage; so would snakes, the 'brothers' of Iltiri: it is said that when there is a nursing mother in the house

[1] Some of the tribal food avoidances are lapsing. Some people in Orombe (Otoro) had eaten their horses when they died, much to the astonishment and disgust of their more orthodox fellow tribesmen.

of an Iltiri man, and if her milk dripped on the floor, snakes would come and lap it up. And if anyone stole something from an Iltobo, lions would surely kill him. Our discussion has led us from purely 'formal' and 'symbolic' clan characteristics to observances which fulfil a definite purpose—and a purpose bound up with the welfare of the whole society. The people themselves distinguish sharply between these clan obligations, the totemic *tabus*, and the merely 'symbolic' food avoidances. The animals to which the latter apply are merely described as 'forbidden'; but these other animals are called the *uyel* of the clan—its 'shadow', 'soul', or 'life principle'. It is significant that the four totemic clans observe 'formal', symbolic food *tabus* as well.

The totemic cult crystallizes in special burial rites which are believed to preserve and renew the kinship between man and his brother animal. If these rites were omitted, even if they were only negligently performed, the totem animals would grow angry and overrun the tribe, killing man and beast. With the disappearance of lions from the Tira hills the totemic cult of Iltobo I has obviously lost its former importance. And this may explain the disappearance also of the sharp distinction between the two sections of Iltobo, which are now commonly thrown together. The 'goat-clan', Ldonyo, too, possesses a burial rite of this magic kind, which, if it were neglected, would cause the death of all pregnant domestic animals. In certain other clans the burial rites, varying with the clan, are similarly linked with animals or insects which affect the welfare of the community, although no corresponding food *tabus* underline this quasi-totemic association. In Iltobo II the burial rites, when properly performed, act as magic against locusts.[1] The burial rites of Iltaro prevent birds from eating the crops, and protect the sheep of the tribe from disease and death. In one section of the Lumene clan the burial rites keep the rats from overrunning the country and destroying the grain in the granaries. In a fourth clan the burial magic is invested with power over the elements: the funeral rites of the Ltrngum clan are believed to keep storms in check. A negligently performed funeral would unleash a disastrous storm that would destroy the crops on the fields. These magic faculties of clans can also be called into action independently of the fixed occasions of deaths and burials. If lions or leopards attacked the villages, if rats, locusts or destructive birds were to invade the country, if livestock died or storms threatened the harvest, the community would appeal to the particular clans for help, or the clans may of their own initiative perform rites closely similar to the burial rites and as magically effective.

There exists yet a third kind of food *tabu*, different from both 'symbolic'

[1] I happened to be in Tira during a disastrous invasion of locusts. So far as I knew, there had been no recent death in the Iltobo clan which could be quoted as an explanation. I was quickly disabused: a woman of the Iltobo clan had died recently, so I was told, just when the District Commissioner happened to visit Tira. As the old men of the clan, among them the *Sheikh*, had to be present at a meeting called in the chief's house, the burial ceremony was performed hastily and with a poor attendance—hence the locusts.

and 'totemic' clan *tabus*. It is a seasonal *tabu*, forbidding the eating of certain first crops. It affects three clans. One section of Itumbel must not eat new pepper until it performed the first-fruit rite for the early crops of the year, nor throw any pepper into the fire, lest the people everywhere suffer from a skin rash, from boils and ulcers. The Larallo clan and Iltobo II are forbidden to eat new beans before the first-fruit rite. There is no sanction linked with this *tabu*, though the first-fruit rite of Iltobo does in a different way affect the whole community: for it represents one of the rituals which secure rain. The avoidances and rites which 'signal' important agricultural phases and which, in other Nuba tribes, are the concern of priests and govern the conduct of the whole community, are here entrusted to special clans. Their avoidances and their rituals are accepted as magic safeguards of a prosperous harvest and the fertility of the land. Again, the different categories of food *tabus* do not exclude each other, but may appear, two or even all three together, in the same clan. Take the Larallo clan: its *tabus* are leopard and fresh beans; or Iltobo I, whose people must not kill and eat lion, and are forbidden to eat wild cat and new pepper.

But not all clans are thus conceived of as influencing through their food *tabus* and death observances the fate of the tribe. In some clans food avoidances and clan-bound rites affect only the members of the particular clan. The second section of the Itumbel clan observes a food *tabu* which, though referring to crops, has no bearing on harvest or fertility: these people must not eat unground grain, or else they would fall ill and pass blood. In the Dangal clan and in one section of Lumene, disregard of the burial customs causes failure of crops in the clan. Sometimes the magic-invested burial rites are linked vaguely with a natural event of no real consequence: in Itumbel II disregard of the burial customs is said to cause fierce heat, without, however, affecting the harvest or the health of the people. Or, finally, the clan observances and burial rites have no bearing at all on the welfare of the people, within or without the clan; this is the case in seven clans—Lgegen, Lorovan, Loghoro, Lgotha, Nuli, Ledhero, and Lgopa.

On the other hand, there exist certain more diffuse forms of clan-bound magic which are neither linked with food *tabus* nor vested in burial rites, yet are as important for the life of the whole society as is the magic working through those media. Two clans, Iltaro and Lgopa, perform certain annual rituals in the middle of the rains which are to secure a rich harvest for all Tira. Each of the two clans has a specific contribution to make: the ritual of Iltaro, which takes place first, is responsible for the quality of the grain—if it were not performed, or not properly performed, the grain would remain small; the Lgopa ceremony, following two days later, is concerned with the quantity of the crops. These rituals are known as *lobo*—which is also the name which the Otoro and Heiban give to their fertility ceremonies—and are performed at a shrine in the shape of a stone cairn (again as in Otoro and Heiban).

Each Tira hill community has its own *lobo*, performed by the old men of the local clan section. The same ceremony may also be performed, independently of any time schedule, to cure barrenness of women—of any clan. The *lobo* of the Umm Dordo Iltaro has gained special fame, and has become almost a place of pilgrimage for barren women from many other districts, from Tira Mande and even Otoro. The Iltaro clan can also produce its grain magic on demand: individuals of any clan whose crops seem to be failing can appeal to Iltaro, and Iltaro clansmen will then perform the *dhuprekyo* magic, using their ritual fat, and observing their ritual numbers, over the threatened grain. Three clans possess a form of magic which lends itself to ordeals and oaths. Individuals who are suspected of a crime are made to swear their innocence on some iron implement, a spear or axe, belonging to a man of Itumbel II or of the Iltobo and Ltrngum clan. The punishments for perjury differ in the three clans, in accordance with the other magic powers vested in these clans: if you broke an oath sworn on Itumbel, you would be killed by an iron weapon; if an oath sworn on Iltobo, lightning would kill you; and if you broke an oath sworn on Ltrngum, a big storm would spring up and destroy your house and fields.

Again, certain clans possess a magic which causes and cures disease in men and beasts. The Itumbel clan can heal any wounds caused by iron (as, in turn, it causes death by iron of perjurers). A man who has received such a wound will be taken to the house of an Itumbel man; he would stay there for seven days, being sprinkled with water from a new gourd by his doctor-host, after which time the wound would close. The grain grown by the Ltrngum clan is said to cause lunacy if it were eaten by anyone except the members of this clan. The Ltrngum can never invite people from other clans to share their meals or join them in beer feasts; the other clans are even afraid to cultivate too close to the Ltrngum fields. But the people whose magic causes lunacy are also experts in curing it (they themselves are never afflicted by lunacy—so people say). The treatment is interesting, as it supplies a logical link with the other magic of this clan, the control of wind and storms. The Ltrngum 'doctor' blows into the nostrils of his patient—'he blows like the wind', say the informants. The same clan possesses a final magic faculty not (or not overtly) related with either storm or lunacy magic: it can help any individual whose animals have strayed to recover them. The Iltiri, as mentioned before, cure snake bite. The Lumene can cure sick animals in every clan by performing their *dhuprekyo* rite over the ailing beast. So can the 'goat clan', Ldonyo. The Lgotha clan, finally, can cure skin rash and boils. The beer of this clan, on the other hand, when spilled on the skin of people from other clans, causes these very diseases. We cannot go into the psychological questions involved in these beliefs of magic diseases and magic cures. We may only point out that, in the majority of the instances which we have examined, the supernatural cures conform to the principle of 'sympathetic magic': the same

magic that causes a disease can also cure it. Yet this 'sympathetic' link rests less on the concrete, substantial identity of the cause and the cure than on the identity of the group from which both cause and cure are derived. In some cases this social category behind the sympathetic magic becomes a balance—a moral balance almost—between two aspects of clan obligations—one destructive and one beneficial. For if the Itumbel clan must cause offenders to die of wounds, or Ltrngum cause storms to punish perjury, the two clans also have the power to heal wounds and prevent storms.

The investment of the clans and their individual members with these magic powers vital to the welfare of the community thus implies a trust and a mission. One might ask what safeguards the community has that this trust is not betrayed. This conception of safeguards, the anxiety lest individuals abuse the powers which they hold, is indeed clearly manifest. It is concerned, above all, with two clans charged with the most vital contributions to the safety of the tribe, the grain clan Iltaro and the rain clan Nuli.[1] The safeguards are radical, but commensurate with the causes and effects which they are meant to control.

It may happen that the annual *lobo* rite of the Iltaro clan fails to produce the desired results. There may be various reasons for this, but one might be that a member of the congregation of Iltaro men was in an angry and revengeful mood at the time, and that his secret ill-will frustrated the rite. If the people suspect such a cause, the old men of other clans will perform a second *lobo*, a counter-ritual as it were, to combat the evil influences of the first. They take a small white stone, smear oil on it, and bury it beside the cairn which serves as altar in the *lobo* ceremony. They utter this spell: 'May the man who destroyed the crops die', and they expect to see him die shortly from a dropsical disease.

The rain magic is vested in two clans, Iltobo (both sections) and Nuli. The Iltobo magic is less important. It is concerned with the rains coming from the south, i.e. the rains which fall when the rainy season is well advanced. The first-fruit ceremony performed by this clan is also devoted to safeguarding these late rains and their continuation through the rainy season. If the rains stop prematurely or are long interrupted, the Iltobo clan sacrifices a bull and prays to God for rain. This rain clan is not, as it were, under surveillance; there is no fear that it might abuse its magic powers.

In the case of Nuli, this fear is great, and the 'surveillance' is so realistic that it is apt to endanger peace and public order. The Nuli clan is responsible for the rains 'coming from the north'—the early rains. The Nuli clan performs no special rain ritual; in fact, it does not come into the picture at all unless the early rains fail and the people become worried and anxious. And then the Nuli people become involved only

[1] There are two grain clans, as we remember—Iltaro and Lgopa. But only the former is suspected of abusing its powers. We shall see that a similar situation obtains in the case of the two rain clans.

as culprits, accused of having kept back the rain, and often as victims of quickly rising mob fury. If a drought breaks out in this or that part of Tira country, the people would rush to Loro or Umm Dordo, where the Nuli clan lives, and accuse a Nuli man of having stopped the rain. They will threaten to burn his house and beat him to death if he does not at once 'release' the rain. An oath on a spear or axe belonging to an Iltobo or Itumbel may clear the Nuli man of this suspicion. On the other hand, it may not: if the drought continues, the enraged people will return and make good their word. As soon as their victim lies on the ground, dead or at least all beaten up, rain should fall. Often it is pure chance who becomes the scapegoat. Any Nuli man will do. But as soon as the rains show signs of failing, the Nuli, knowing what might be in store for them, will stay away from their houses during the day or even hide in the hills. The unfortunate fellow who was not quick or not cautious enough will be quickly apprehended and punished for the guilt of his clan. If, however, it has become known that a particular man of Nuli bears a grudge against someone else—perhaps against the paramour of his wife, or against a man who had cheated or insulted him—the vague suspicion becomes certainty, and it is at once assumed that the Nuli had stopped the rain in order to revenge himself on the world at large. No assurances or oaths can save him. Nor does his death entail any of the retaliations demanded in ordinary homicide.

A desire for revenge is always believed to be the cause of the Nuli magic. Clearly, no man would try to destroy the livelihood of his group without a reason. But the reason is fluid enough to apply to any contingency. For the act which provokes this desire for revenge need not have been committed in the present generation; the people now living may, in fact, be wholly ignorant of this cause for which their fathers or grandfathers were responsible. Only the Nuli culprit himself is always assumed to have acted consciously and purposefully. He stops the rain, it seems, by burying in secret a piece of iron under the ground in his hut; when he digs it up again, the rain is released. This, at least, is what the other clans say. In a conversation with a number of Nuli men, I extricated, after a long and delicate cross-examination, their admission that such was indeed the secret magic practised by their clan. But none of the five Nuli men present would admit that either he or anyone he knew had ever performed it. The comment of informants from other clans was: 'How can you expect them to admit it? They are afraid to tell the truth.' We may add that the Nuli clan (like the other rain clan, Iltobo) is also associated with lightning. If a person is killed by lightning his (or her) relations will present a goat to a man of Nuli, who will sprinkle them with water and thus lift the threat of this death from them.

The belief in the Nuli rain magic has lost nothing of its strength and convincingness. In 1914 people from Loro burnt down the house of a Nuli man in Umm Dordo and beat him up so badly that he died afterwards. In 1922 people from Kora, Jokhob, and Kattei threatened

KOALIB WOMAN

FARM WORK OF AGE-GRADES IN OTORO : THE 'CAPTAIN' OF THE GRADE SPURRING ON HIS TEAM

CICATRIZATION IN OTORO: THE *dei moco* WEARS A BAND AND OSTRICH FEATHER ROUND HIS HEAD, ON HIS LEFT THE WOMAN 'SURGEON' PERFORMING THE OPERATION

Mek ARNO OF OTORO

to kill a Nuli, who fled to the police post near-by; the policemen happened to be out, and the crowd pursued their quarry and killed him in front of the Government rest-house. In 1936 again people from these three villages burnt a Nuli house in Umm Dordo, beat the man and would have killed him but for the timely arrival of the chief of the tribe. A case which came before the Tira court in 1939 (I shall describe it later in more detail) showed the belief in Nuli magic still strongly alive.

As we notice, the Umm Dordo people themselves do not join in these attacks on the Nuli living in the same community. On the contrary, they will try to defend their fellow citizens; for having lived together so long, they have become 'like brothers'. When the Nuli man was killed in 1922, the drought did not break for a long time afterwards. But that did, or does, not affect the implicit belief of the tribe in the effectiveness of their radical counter-measures: 'Perhaps we got the wrong man that time', was all my informants would admit.

Now in all the various forms of clan magic which we have discussed any man of the clan can—at least in theory—be appealed to to perform the magic rites or the magic treatments which are the property of his group. But in practice one would always turn to the old and experienced men and family heads in the clan. They would also lead and supervise the fixed clan rites (burial ceremonies, first-fruit rites), in which there must be no mistakes or inaccuracies. Here we understand the meaning of that spiritual leadership of the old men in the Tira clans of which we have spoken earlier in this discussion. The clan magic can be performed only by men—never by women. Although, as we shall see, wives are adopted fully into their husbands' clans and follow all their clan observances (including observances which affect only the women, e.g. the shaving of the hair of young mothers), women are not believed to share their husbands' magic faculties also.

The bewildering complexity of Tira clan magic is rendered even more confusing by the fact that single clans may possess a number of widely different magic faculties. Take the Iltobo: they are in charge of a first-fruit rite; they are responsible for the late rains; they command the lightning ordeal, and, through their burial rites, control the locusts. Or the Ltrngum: they control the wind and storms; they cause and cure lunacy; they help you to recover animals which have strayed. The Iltaro, whose funeral rites affect the health of the domestic animals of the tribe, are also responsible for the annual grain ceremony and for magic against barrenness of women; the Larallo, the 'leopard clan', must also perform, on behalf of the tribe, the first-fruit rite of the new beans, and so forth. There is evidence to show that what strikes us in this system of clan magic as a confusing complexity, difficult to reduce to clear-cut rules, appears as such to the people themselves. The conceptual system of the tribe seems inadequate in face of the wealth of magic forms and this almost haphazard accumulation of magic faculties

by single clans. This is revealed in the inconsistent use of the word *uyel*, which defines the 'life-principle', the 'soul'—the totem of the clan. In the clans in which the totem animal and its magic overshadow all other magic faculties which the particular clan might claim also—the snake of Iltiri, the leopard of Larallo, or the goat of Ldonyo—the name *uyel* is given without hesitation to the brother-animal. But where several forms of magic of equal strength and significance appear combined in the same clan, the definition of the *uyel* becomes inconsistent and even uncertain. In the locust section of Iltobo it is not the locusts which are called the 'soul' or 'totem' of the clan, but the other magic of the clan, the rain; as regards the lion section of Iltobo, opinions differ: some hold that the lion is the *uyel*, others that the *uyel* is again the rain. In Itumbel, with its food *tabu* of unground grain and its burial magic believed to cause fierce heat, the third magic of the clan, iron, represents the *uyel*. Ltrngum, the clan associated with lunacy, storms and sinister grain magic, calls both grain and storms its *uyel*. In Lumene, whose burial magic is associated with rats, these animals are called the *uyel* of the clan, though there is no conception of any kinship between man and animal. Finally, there are the clans which have only 'symbolic' food *tabus* and no clan magic—clans without a 'soul'.

When discussing the sub-division of the Tira clans into sections possessing separate ritual avoidances and magic faculties, I suggested as an explanation that the Tira tribe attempted by these means to expand its magic mastery of the universe. This seems indeed also the explanation for this tendency of clans to accumulate magic powers and ritual devices. It is true that, while some clans have assumed three and four different kinds of magic, others were completely overlooked in this share-out of supernatural offices—the clans Lgegen, Loriyo, Lorovan, Loghoro, Ledhero. Two of the five 'dispossessed' clans are, as we see, the clans representing originally alien groups; all are small clans. It seems, then, that the accumulation of magic prerogatives and obligations reflects the size and importance of the clans. The clans which have the biggest stake in the country also claim the greater share in the tasks of its supernatural guidance and protection.

Let me add a few words on the effects of Arab contacts on the Tira clan system, as they reveal themselves in the strongly arabicized Tira colony at Mande. The names of the clans and most of their symbolic observances have survived; the clan food avoidances are still observed, although under Arab influence these Tira groups have adopted a new general food avoidance and no longer eat (or keep) pigs. The Itumbel people are still appealed to as the healers of wounds caused by iron, the Iltobo as the masters of locusts, or the Ltrngum as the experts for lunacy. But the Arab charms have replaced the oath on axes or spears of certain clans. And, above all, one no longer believes in the capacity of the Nuli to stop the rain (there are Nuli living in Tira Mande). Rain or drought, the people now know, are the will of Allah. But if lightning

strikes a house or kills a man, one still goes to the Nuli clan for the magic purification.

The Tira in Mande, as well as certain families in Kalkadda which have adopted Mohammedanism, bury their dead in the shallow oblong graves of Arab pattern. But in these new graves they place the body in accordance with the ritual directions of the various clans and not, as the Arabs do, with the face turned towards the east. The ritual direction itself, however, has become a new problem, at least with regard to the Tombore clans of Tira. There are two schools of thought in Tira Mande, each insisting that its own view is the correct one and that the other group is at fault. One, composed chiefly of the older men, holds that the correct direction is towards Tombore, because it was from there that their ancestors first arrived in this country; the other, representing the views of the younger generation, would orientate the ritual direction on the hills of Tira el Akhdar, Loro, Kattei, &c., on the grounds that their ancestors lived there before coming to Mande. Once I listened to a long and heated argument over this article of faith (during which occasionally members of the same clan took opposite views); in the end a compromise was suggested: Tombore was the right direction for those whose fathers are already buried in Mande, and the Tira hills for those whose fathers lie buried there. The logic of this compromise struck neither me nor some of the older members of the Tira synod as conclusive. But the very uncertainty of their views is significant. For it shows the survival of the guiding principle of the ritual direction—that it should preserve the memory of the origin of clans and thus express their timeless identity and individuality.

We turn to the Moro clans—more exactly, to the Moro clans represented in Umm Dorein. Let me first give their names, arranged roughly in the order of their size: Gilu, Nagyara, Amruth, Ekela, Ludhar, Bowru (the chief's clan), Lamagyan, Ndri, Negiro, Dulu, Lgyerto, Ledri, Udeleŋ, Agyen, Tinyare, Manda, Lorein. The principles of clan organization which we discovered in Tira also define the clan system of Moro, though there they express themselves partly in symbols of a different kind—in different terms of reference, as it were. Some of our familiar clan symbols are missing: there are no ritual numbers, no ritual fats, and no clan-bound ritual directions (all the Moro are buried with the head pointing east). They have been replaced by new 'formal' clan observances, which revolve round the birth ritual and couvade, and round the first menstruation of girls. Two days after birth the Moro perform a certain ritual, after which the mother may start nursing the infant, and which also marks the beginning of a five days' period of rigid avoidances on the part of the mother and the whole family. The ritual and the period of avoidances are called *dru*. Now the avoidances imposed during the *dru* vary with the clan; some clans are forbidden to keep a fire in their houses during this period; other clans are allowed a fire, but it must be kept very small, must not be used for cooking food, and

must be fed with goat dung, not wood; or the fire may be lit and used for cooking, but people from other houses must not fetch firebrands or light their fire on the fire of the house observing *dru*. Other clans again have no fire *tabu*, but must seal their granaries with clay for the duration of the *dru*. In yet other clans the mother observes certain food *tabus*, or a couvade of the father of the new-born is combined with the *dru*, while other clans have neither food *tabus* nor couvade. The first menstruation of daughters is marked in certain clans by a five days' seclusion of the girl, who must stay with neighbours and is forbidden to sleep or eat at home during this time; on the fifth day she is rubbed all over with oil and readmitted to the parental home. In other clans the girl's body is painted half red and half black, with ochre and soot, on the day when she returns from her seclusion. In other clans, again, no rites or avoidances are linked with the first menstruation.

Like the Tira, the Moro observe clan food *tabus*. The animals in question are hare, fowl, squirrel, wild cat, and leopard. One clan sometimes observes several of these *tabus*, but one or the other might lapse in the case of clan members who have reached the status of 'old men'. Thus the Bowru clan is forbidden to eat fowl, squirrel, and hare, but the last animal is allowed to old men. As in the case of the 'formal' food *tabus* in Tira, the mere killing of the *tabu* animal does no harm, and the sanction for breaking the food *tabu* affects only the individual guilty of the offence. With very few exceptions (e.g. in the Udelep clan; see the examples given below), this punishment is in the nature of a, mostly fatal, disease. Both the magic afflictions and the forms of treatment by which they can be forestalled or cured are much more varied than in Tira. In some clans the breaking of the food *tabu* is said to cause blindness, which is treated by washing the eyes with soup made of the flesh and hair of the *tabu* animal. Or the sin against the food *tabu* causes a wasting disease which, judging from the description of its symptoms, seems to be sleeping-sickness. This *tabu* demands the following treatment: the bones of the animal are thrown into the fire and the patient is made to inhale the smoke. Or we meet again with the crippling disease which 'breaks the limbs', treated in Moro as follows: an old man of the clan kills the *tabu* animal, takes out its bones and the contents of its stomach, pounds the bones to a powder, which is mixed with the stomach content, and then rubs the patient's body with this magic substance.[1]

The wide variations in these clan rules and avoidances, their occurrence in some and absence in other clans, the arbitrary combinations and permutations in which they appear, all prove their purely formal, diacritical nature. Let me give a few instances.

Bowru clan: *tabu* animals, hare, fowl, squirrel; breach of the *tabu*

[1] The cripple in Moro of whom I have spoken before, who is believed to owe his lameness to an offence against his clan food *tabu*, had tried this cure. When I pointed out to my informants that he was still lame, they replied that there had been a marked improvement in his condition since he underwent the treatment.

causes lameness; both *dru* and couvade observed, fire forbidden during *dru*; first menstruation, five days' seclusion, afterwards girl rubbed with oil.

Lamagyan clan: *tabu* animal, squirrel; breach of the *tabu* causes blindness; no couvade; during *dru* fire forbidden, and mother forbidden to eat meat and beans; no first menstruation rites.

Manda clan: *tabu* animals, wild cat and leopard; breach of the *tabu* causes tumour of the head; both *dru* and couvade; fire forbidden during *dru*; first menstruation, five days' seclusion, afterwards girl painted black and red.

Udeleŋ clan: *tabu* animals, wild cat and leopard; breach of *tabu* causes failure of the crops; both *dru* and couvade observed; fire not forbidden during *dru*, but granaries must be sealed and all food procured from outside; no menstruation rites.

The sanction of the food *tabu* mentioned in this last example is exceptional. But, like the illness which follows upon offences against the other food *tabus*, the failure of the crop in the Udeleŋ clan affects primarily the offender himself (though indirectly, it must affect his family also). None of the Moro food *tabus* entails sanctions which affect the community at large. Nor are any of the food *tabus* linked with totemic beliefs. Only one big predatory animal appears in the list of forbidden animals, the leopard, and this food *tabu* (which is not a killing *tabu* as well) invariably goes together with the clan *tabu* forbidding the eating of wild cats. The effects of offences against the leopard food *tabu* thus in no way reflect the nature or habits of the animal, nor do the people conceive of any intimate relation or kinship between man and animal. This is true even in the case of one clan, Gilu, whose members can summon the help of leopards against unknown thieves who have raided their livestock; significantly, the Gilu food *tabus* do not include the leopard.

Only one Moro clan observes a seasonal food *tabu* of the kind we discovered in Tira. The Lamagyan people are forbidden to eat *daraba* (okra), one of the early fruits of the year, until they have performed a certain seasonal rite, called *nela*, which is believed to safeguard the harvest of late-maturing grain for the whole tribe. The ritual is performed in the middle of the rains, at night, and in utmost secrecy. For its magic is such that if the smoke from the sheep's fat which the Lamagyan burn, in incense fashion, on this occasion entered the nostrils of any man belonging to another clan, his nose would be eaten away 'as by syphilis'. Anyone suffering from syphilis, on the other hand, can be cured by the Lamagyan clan, by being given some of their *tabu*-surrounded *daraba* to eat.

This example illustrates the two media through which the Moro clan exercises its magic faculties of influencing the fate and the welfare of the tribe: first, clan ceremonies, called *amadi*, which are indispensable to the prosperity of the group; and, secondly, clan-bound magic agencies, known as *kamradha*, which often act automatically (as in the example just quoted), and cause and cure disease.

Five clans apart from Lamagyan are charged with the performance of such clan ceremonies. Three of these ceremonies are seasonal ceremonies which initiate an important agricultural activity or safeguard a prosperous harvest. The Ekela and Nagyara clans (like Lamagyan, large Moro clans) perform a certain ritual heralding the cutting of the early grain, for which the whole community must wait before it can begin with the harvest. Should this 'signal' be ignored, the crops everywhere would fail. The Udeleŋ clan, which is the rain clan of Moro, is charged with an annual sacrifice to secure a satisfactory rainy season. The sacrifice itself is called *rumu*, 'rains', and takes place during the sowing season. But in times of drought, too, the old men of Udeleŋ may be appealed to by the community to perform this sacrifice and to produce rain. Like the Tira, the Moro believe that any man of the rain clan can stop the rains (either by tying three blades of grass together and hiding them under an upturned gourd, or by ceasing to 'water' the rainstones which this clan possesses); a personal grudge and the desire for revenge are again assumed to be the reasons. But the Moro do not practise the radical measures of the Tira. The Moro will try to ascertain and, if possible, to remove the grievance. They will visit one of the old men of the clan and ask him: 'Do you know if any of your brothers is angry? Tell us why.' If the Udeleŋ man is angry because his wife has committed adultery with another man, the people will compel the paramour to discontinue his inopportune attentions; if the grievance of the Udeleŋ man is that someone had stolen property of his, the people will try to apprehend the thief or else they will themselves make good the loss. This happened in 1939: an Udeleŋ man had lost a goat and was certain it had been stolen; he frankly admitted having tied up the sinister blades of grass. His magic had the desired effect—whichever way we look at it: there was a drought, and the people of Umm Dorein presented him with gifts of grain which amounted to more than the value of a goat. These gifts are not made only to the one angry member of the clan, but to all the family heads: for a really satisfactory rainy season can only be procured by the good wishes and the united effort of the whole rain clan.

The two remaining clan ceremonies, which belong to the Gilu and Bowru clans, are performed only once in four years, in the same year. Their professed purpose is again to make the crops grow, to procure rain, and to ensure in general health and prosperity of the tribe. The ceremony of the Gilu clan is called *orapana*; it is performed in April, before the sowing starts, and the consecration of the seed-grain which the clan will use plays an important part in the ritual proceedings. The ceremony of the Bowru clan, *ruwu*, takes place immediately after sowing. Its main feature is a dance of the old men, performed nightly, up on the top of Umm Dorein hill, for one whole month. With the end of this dance of the old men the time for the first weeding has come, and there will be no further dances, of any kind, till harvest time. But this

significance as fertility and 'signal' rites is overshadowed by the four-year cycle to which both ceremonies are bound and which invests them with a meaning of a different order. In elaborating the four-year cycle these ceremonies underline, as we shall see later, a vital interval in the life of the tribe and in its regulation of adolescence. The Gilu clan also performs an annual first-fruit rite which, in much the same way as the rites of Ekela and Nagyara, initiates the harvest and the first eating of the early-maturing grain. We will mention only one feature of this rite, which represents a transition from the clan ceremonies, *amadi*, to the clan magic proper, *kamradha*. During this ceremony all the people of Gilu smear their faces and chests with milk; now, if any member of another clan used Gilu milk in this way, or merely drank of Gilu milk, he would become deaf. In turn, the Gilu clan can cure deafness in other people, whatever its cause, by smearing their *tabu* milk into the ears of the patient.

We remember a similar magic in the Lamagyan clan, which inflicts syphilis on any outsider who as much as smells the incense used by that clan. Here the 'automatic' clan magic appears as a protection, almost a magic copyright, of the secret rites and supernatural faculties of the two clans, threatening intruders and would-be imitators. In other clans this magic protection is extended so wide as to include any attempt (actual or potential) on the part of strangers to harm a member of the particular clan. The *kamradha* magic of the different clans differs widely in range and severity. In some clans (e.g. Ekela, Bowru, Agyen) any stranger who entered their houses with evil intentions (to commit adultery or burglary, or simply to quarrel with the people of the house) would be struck with dizziness and headache. In the Gilu clan this protective magic is slightly stronger: the intruder would be rooted to the spot and would be incapable of moving till the owner of the house released him by sprinkling water over him. The rain clan Udelen possesses the severest magic of this kind; lunacy would afflict anyone who entered an Udelen house with black thoughts; thieves who stole and ate animals belonging to this clan would be struck by lightning; even the grain and simsim of the clan is dangerous to strangers and might cause madness if they ate of it without the special authority of the man who planted the crops. When people buy grain or accept animals (e.g. in bride-price payments) they always make certain first that the grain or animals did not come from the Udelen clan.

In every case the clan whose magic causes an illness also possesses the antidote, which is effective, not only in afflictions produced by the *kamradha* magic itself, but in any illness of that description. Thus various clans can cure dizziness and headaches, which they do by sprinkling water over the patient. The Udelen people are specialists for lunacy (their treatment consists mainly in flogging the patient with the twigs of a certain tree). The Gilu people, as we have heard, are experts in treating deafness, and the Lamagyan in treating syphilis. The Bowru clan,

rather inconsistently, can cure a certain illness caused by the disregard of the seasonal food avoidance laid down by other clans: children who, from ignorance, would eat of the early-maturing grain before the Gilu or Ekela clans had performed their first-fruit rites would be unable to move, their backs would be rigid and stiff, and they would cry from pain. Massage by old men of Bowru would quickly remove the affliction.

The people are generally more cautious than the theory of *kamradha* magic seems to warrant. According to the theory, only those who enter the house of the *kamradha*-protected clan with malevolent thoughts need fear the effects of the protective magic. In practice people are always chary of entering the house of a clan credited with a strong *kamradha* magic, except with the full knowledge and express invitation of the family head. When these clans perform a feast in their houses to which strangers are invited (a marriage feast, a beer party after collective farm work), the family head would first of all sprinkle water over his guests to inoculate them against the effects of *kamradha* magic. Once, when I went to visit the house of an Udelen man up on top of Umm Dorein, my guides and interpreter left me some distance from the door of the house and refused to come further: whether they did so from a feeling that they had better not be associated with a visit of so uncertain moral qualities, or because they mistrusted its 'stealthiness' (for we had not announced our coming, and it so happened that the head of the house was out), I will not decide.

The complete automatism of the *kamradha* magic is underlined by the phraseology which the people use. They say of this magic that 'the house punishes the intruder', and that strangers, i.e. members of other clans, are its victims because 'the house does not know them'. The 'house', evidently, is not credited with too fine a sense of discrimination. At least in its mild form, causing headache and slight dizziness, the magic self-protection of the 'house' is common to all Moro clans. But there exists another form of *kamradha*, which is no longer automatic, and needs human action to release it and human will to guide it. More deadly in nature, it is in the possession of a few clans only, yet is not a rigid, exclusive clan property. Clans which are without it can borrow or 'hire' this magic, the price remaining a secret rarely divulged. They buy the magic services of the clans vested with this variety of *kamradha* much as other tribes (e.g. Heiban) buy the services of magicians or priests wielding a witchcraft-like power. This 'active' *kamradha* magic is, in fact, closely akin to witchcraft and, like all Nuba witchcraft, it is effective only if used in retaliation for a tort and against the real culprit.

The people of the Negiro clan, for example, can kill a thief or anyone who defrauded them of their property by burying a piece of iron or some goat's hair in the house of the suspect; or they can kill a man guilty of adultery with a Negiro wife by carrying sand from his tracks by night into his house. The victim will pass blood, and when he dies his skin will be found to be covered with red spots. The Dbartan clan (originally of

Umm Dorein, but found to-day only in Kororak) practises the same kind of magic, but its effect is lameness. The Udelej people bury a brass object (e.g. a brass bangle) when practising their *kamradha* against thieves, causing lameness; in the case of adultery, they beat the air with a stick, and the adulterer will collapse wherever he is, red weals, as from lashes, running down his back. The Tumren clan (another Umm Dorein clan now found only in Kororak) buries a cowrie shell in the ground to punish thieves; the culprit will be afflicted with a wasting disease and eventually die.

Each kind of magic has its specific cure, which any old man of the clan possessed of the particular magic can perform. The rule has to be rather fluid, as no man is likely to admit having used his *kamradha* in a concrete case. He may go so far as to say: 'Perhaps So-and-so (the victim) has stolen some of my grain or simsim without my knowledge, and my *kamradha* punished him'; or: 'It is true I am angry with So-and-so because he has seduced my wife; but I have done nothing—my *kamradha* has caught him.' Though inconsistent with the concept of this active *kamradha* magic, an explanation of this kind is invariably accepted as satisfactory by the victim and his relations. 'Sorcerer' and victim bear each other out in maintaining a fiction in which neither believes, but which is most helpful in excluding the element of personal revenge from what is essentially an impersonal act of justice. If the victim dies in spite of the treatment, the 'cure' has simply come too late; his (or her) relations will then undergo the same treatment, for like most forms of magic sanction in the Nuba tribes the effects of the *kamradha* magic are thought of as infectious.

Women, specially, are said to make ample use of this *kamradha* magic (either their own or their husbands'), for they quarrel incessantly—over water, firewood, or crops—much more than the men. Unlike the 'automatic' magic, the 'active' *kamradha* is effective also against members of one's own clan. Notwithstanding the secrecy which surrounds it, I have been able to record also a few instances of the 'borrowing' or 'hiring' of this magic. It has, apparently, fallen in disuse, as it had proved a double-edged sword. For the *kamradha* magic 'hired' by strangers is apt to strike back on the man who is using it. Take the case of a certain Mbarga, of the Lamagyan clan. When his father, one of the greatest cattle-raiders in pre-Government days, died, all the men whose herds he had plundered reclaimed their animals. Mbarga, seeing the considerable fortune dissolve before his eyes, went to a Negiro man, bought or borrowed some iron rings and buried them in the houses of the men who had 'stolen' his patrimony. All that happened, however, was that five of Mbarga's sons died, all on one day. He rushed to the owner of the magic with (my informants thought) large gifts, to make him cut short the disastrous magic.

We observe that in Moro as in Tira certain clans tend to accumulate magic faculties. The Gilu clan, for example, has the severe automatic *kamradha*, which roots intruders or burglars to the spot; it also punishes

persons who steal or drink milk from its goats or cows with deafness; the Gilu people can finally call in leopards to attack anyone who stole their livestock. The Udeleŋ clan commands an even fuller gamut of magic agencies: one of its automatic *kamradha* principles causes lunacy, and another death by lightning; it possesses one active *kamradha* magic against thieves, and another against adulterers. The different nature of the clan-bound magic (as compared with Tira) points to a different explanation of the fact that these two clans, at least, are so amply invested with magic powers. In the case of Gilu the accumulation of magic faculties might partly reflect the physical weight and size of the clan. But in the case of the small Udeleŋ clan a correlation of a different kind suggests itself: this clan, whose friendly temper and contentedness is of vital importance to the whole community, is made doubly secure by *kamradha* magic from those detractions which might upset its precious equanimity. Here, however, our explanation must stop. We cannot say why some clans should have a light, and others a severe *kamradha* magic, or why some should be content with the 'automatic' variety while others can utilize the active, witchcraft-like principle. Neither the material nor the spiritual importance of the clans lend themselves to a correlation with the apportionment of magic properties. We can only suggest that the practice of 'borrowing' or 'hiring' active *kamradha* magic must to some extent counterbalance the irrational magic inequality of clans.

The list of Moro clan magic seems shorter than that of Tira. Three forms of clan magic, for example, which figure prominently in the Tira clan system seem to be absent in Moro—locust magic, storm magic, and the magic cure of barrenness. But with regard to magic resources, the Moro hill community is not, or need not be, self-contained, and can benefit from the combined resources, though not of the whole tribe, of a number of hill communities. The majority of clan rituals and magic faculties, whether embodied in identical or different clans, repeat themselves in the different Moro hills. But there are a few which are limited to single clans and (at least to-day) single hills. Umm Dorein can find the rituals and forms of magic of which she is deprived in her sister community, Lebu. There the Amrus clan boasts a strong magic against barrenness, and possesses a special, most powerful ceremony, called *edowa* and performed in six years' intervals, which secures the fecundity of women of the whole Moro tribe. Another Lebu clan, Ludar, claims the magic control of wind and storms; yet another, Dlu, controls locusts. Lebu, in turn, depends on the rain clan Udeleŋ in Umm Dorein.

Yet the local separation to some extent also weakens this magic interdependence. This is clearly shown in the case of the hill community of Kororak, which, being the result of irregular immigration from other hills, should feel this dependence on outside clan magic most strongly. The people of Kororak do feel this dependence, but they do not necessarily turn to the mother or sister communities to correct their own magic limitations. There is no locust magic in Kororak—a lack very severely

felt during the locust invasions of recent years. But when I stayed in Kororak in 1940 the people had invited a famous locust expert from the Korongo tribe to their hill, who sold them a magic potion as an anti-locust specific. They did not for a moment think of enlisting the help of the locust clan in Lebu. It is true that the Lebu locust clan has lost ground even in its own country. The singular failure of its rites in recent years convinced the people that the strength of this clan magic had somehow waned. It might, they thought, be only a temporary eclipse, due to the fact that most of the old men of the clan were dead, and that only young men remained, who did not yet 'understand the magic very well'.

On the other hand, there have been no signs of weakening in the wind and storm magic—as I could witness myself. I was staying in Umm Dorein when one of the longest and most severe dust storms ever known in the country swept the Nuba Mountains. The people associated it at once with the wind clan in Lebu, and were certain that some devilry of one of its members was the cause. Two days later the name of the man was known to everyone; afterwards I obtained the whole story in Lebu. Every family head of the Ludar clan, it appears, has a magic pot in his house, in which he 'keeps the wind'. This pot must never be moved, lest the storms break loose and devastate the country. Now, a few days before the dust storm a certain Mamedan Agingeli of the Ludar clan, whose boy had recently died, had abandoned his house and removed the magic pot to the new place where he decided to live. This, of course, released the storm. Opinions were divided as to whether he had done it consciously, in anger over the death of his boy (who, as my informants had it, was killed by *kamradha* magic by a divorced wife of Mamedan), or unwittingly, with no thought of revenge. Whichever may have been the case, the situation was evidently far from safe; so, when the storm had blown itself out, the people of Lebu prevailed on Mamedan to restore the pot to its old place. This story has an interesting sequel. A few months later a yellow-fever epidemic broke out in the Nuba Mountains, and the Moro, like most of the other Nuba tribes, associated the disease with that uncanny, terrible dust storm. But the Moro did not trace the causal nexus back to what they regarded as the primary cause of the storm: the dust storm must have caused the disease, as it were, in its own right. The specific nature of Moro clan magic clearly precluded an interpretation that would credit clans with even indirect magic influences other than those included in their definition.

In stating that certain forms of clan magic are limited to single clans, existing in single hill communities, we were speaking with a slight inaccuracy. We should have spoken of local clan sections rather than clans. For the Amrus clan, which performs the fertility ritual in Lebu, also exists in Umm Dorein; so does the wind clan Ludar (called Ludhar in Umm Dorein); and the locust clan Dlu exists in both Umm Dorein (here known as Dula) and Kororak. However, the clan sections in Umm Dorein and Kororak do not share in the magic power which their clans

claim in the mother hill, Lebu. This disappearance of certain clan magic in the offshoot communities is in striking contrast with the situation in Tira. The explanation seems to lie in another fundamental difference between Moro and Tira magic. The Tira magic is of an abstract and diffuse nature; but certain forms of clan magic in Moro are bound up with concrete objects and paraphernalia. Of some we have heard already; the wind magic of the Ludar clan is embodied in a magic pot (which must not be moved); the rain clan possesses special rain stones; the *edowa* fertility ceremony is linked with the worship of a sacred black stone (apparently a meteorite) which is kept in a secret place in Lebu; the locust clan uses a hole in the ground in its magic rites; the *orapana* ritual of the Gilu clan implies the use of four sacred drums. In a sense, the iron or brass objects used in the active *kamradha* magic, and even the automatic magic vested in the 'house', equally represent such concrete paraphernalia. Some of these paraphernalia cannot be moved. But even in the case of the clan magic whose paraphernalia can technically be moved, the magic does not follow the clan members automatically wherever they go, as does the abstract clan magic of Tira. The concrete objects in which it is embodied must be divided and apportioned; they are subject to the rules of inheritance, and their changing hands entails considerations of seniority and similar qualifications, as does the changing hands of any valuable property belonging to house and family. If, for example, the young people or the junior branch of a family emigrate (as would often be the case), the emigrants would not be allowed to take the magic paraphernalia with them, and might even completely forfeit the title to the supernatural patrimony. The sacred drums of the Gilu clan are an exception that confirms the rule. Two families in this clan are in the possession of the drums, one in Umm Dorein, and the other, an emigrant family belonging to a different clan section, in Kororak; but the remaining families and clan sections of Gilu in Umm Dorein itself are without these sacred objects of their clan cult, and, although the old men of the whole clan share in the magic properties of Gilu, they must accept the leadership of this one family and its head in the celebration of their great ceremonies.

It is clear that the existence of these magic paraphernalia, which become the property of a family and house, and which can be distributed only through the approved channels of inheritance, must also affect the situation in the single community and clan section. The Moro term *nyagar uteri*, 'old men (lit. grandfathers) of the clan', has thus two meanings. One refers to physical age: in this sense any old and experienced man can exercise the magic faculties of his clan, benevolent or malignant (this is also the situation in Tira). The other meaning refers to headship of a family or of the senior branch of a family: this position alone entails, in certain clans, the guardianship of the sacred paraphernalia and the leadership in the clan ceremonies. I cannot go more deeply into the religious implications of this situation. Let me only point out that here

the conception of a clan magic vested in every member of the group is shading over into that of a special religious office, almost of an hereditary priestship.

In Heiban and Otoro the people of different clans merely know that each clan has different observances and ritual rules, but are largely ignorant of clan rules other than their own. In Tira and Moro this is true only of the 'symbolic' and 'formal' clan observances; but the various clan rites and forms of clan magic are common knowledge. Everyone knows to which clan, and possibly to which family in the clan, he has to turn for this or that magic or cure. The awareness of likeness and difference is deepened into the consciousness of mutual interdependence. Neither Tira nor Moro have the special 'clan meals' which we recorded in Heiban-Otoro. But the repeated occasions for the performance of clan magic, the seasonal and biographical events celebrated with clan rites, constitute integrative agencies of infinitely greater power. In Tira different clans are forbidden to eat meat or corn gruel together (there is no *tabu* on milk), at the penalty of leprosy; the Moro recognize no such avoidances between clans. But again these factors of clan integration and differentiation are overshadowed by the paramount integration under the aspect of mutual interdependence of all clans in the community or tribe. The clans hang together, as it were, by two hinges; one is biological necessity—clans depend on each other for marriage and thus for the continuity of the species; the other is spiritual necessity—the knowledge that the welfare of each clan depends on supernatural help in the possession of the others. The segments are indispensable to each other and thus to the existence of the society as a whole. Though possessed of individual identity, they cannot stand by themselves. But in fulfilling their own individuality they render the life of the whole society possible. They are, to use a concept which I have developed elsewhere, elements in a 'symbiotic' union.[1]

The symbiotic interdependence is not an ideal one—either from structural or utilitarian point of view. The rules of exogamy and intermarriage follow an irregular pattern. The magic faculties are unevenly distributed through the tribe, and their distribution does not correspond to the varying size or importance of the clans. We could discern the tendency to achieve such correspondence. That it remained but a tendency is due to physical facts—to the uneven growth of clans, and to their immigrations or emigrations. These facts preclude the permanency of any ideal or optimum arrangement—which, even when achieved, could only be a passing phase.

Physical facts also circumscribe the effectiveness of the symbiotic union as such. We have spoken above, rather vaguely, of the 'mutual interdependence of all clans in the community or tribe'. When describing a particular clan magic, the Tira or Moro man would speak, equally vaguely, of its effects on 'all the people'. The vagueness of this definition

[1] See *Man*, 1938. No. 85.

is inherent in the structure of the groups with which we are dealing. Reduced to concrete facts, the symbiotic interdependence is constantly modified by two factors. One is physical distance. It is easy to see that the belief in the interdependence of the welfare of different groups must be correlated with a common physical environment. If two local sections are so far distant from one another that one can suffer drought while the other has plenty of rain, or one be invaded by locusts while the other escapes unscathed, the belief in the common fate cannot survive. This factor of distance separates one Tira section, Lomon, from the rest of the tribe—notwithstanding the facts of common origin, common culture, and the possession of common clans. During a poor year in Tira proper, I was told in Kalkadda that the Tira of Lomon had had an excellent harvest 'because they had some special magic'. On closer inspection, this magic turned out to be the common Tira magic associated with the 'grain clan', Ltrngum. But as not all forms of clan magic are bound up with physical conditions, distance proves an ambiguous criterion of symbiotic integration. The Tira of Mande do not believe that their rains depend on the Nuli clan in Dordo; but they believe that the fertility cult of the Iltobo in Dordo can bring fecundity to their women.

The awareness of mutual dependence must also vary with the knowledge which the different groups have of each other—that is, with the social contacts between them, which diffuse and keep alive this knowledge. The mere existence of a locust magic in Lebu, which in theory fills the gap in the list of clan magic of Umm Dorein and Kororak, is meaningless in itself; the existence of the magic, the fact that it has been performed (or not performed) on such and such a date, and all other facts bearing on this magic property of the one hill must be known to the other communities should they become fully aware of their intertwined fate. When the sand storm happened of which I have spoken before, the people in Umm Dorein had no doubts where to look for the cause—and the remedy. On the other hand, Umm Dorein knows little about what goes on in the way of clan rites or magic in Karbaj hill or Umm Gabrella. The people of Umm Dorein know, theoretically, that the other groups have clans like their own, possibly the same clans, certainly clans organized on identical lines. They imply that the other hills, too, possess forms of clan magic of greatest value to the welfare of 'all the people'. But when I discussed the *orapana* ritual, which I had seen in Karbaj the previous year, with informants in Umm Dorein I found that they were not even sure of the date when this ritual, which they themselves possess, is performed in the other community.

The conception of symbiotic interdependence thus exists in two degrees of intensity, extending over two orbits of different depth. The first is the narrow orbit of actual co-operation (in a spiritual sense): of group sections bound together by the intense consciousness of interdependence, fostered by physical propinquity, constant contacts and, emerging from

them, intimate knowledge of each other's life. In Tira the whole tribe with the exception of Lomon forms this narrow symbiotic union. In Moro it embraces only certain hill communities, in the case of Umm Dorein, this hill together with Lebu and Kororak. The other, wider orbit is that of an abstract belonging together which rests, ultimately, on the consciousness of common culture. Again, the boundaries are fluid: they are, as we have seen, constantly redrawn by historical changes—migrations, estrangement, and the reorientation of social intercourse. If we believe in the tradition of a common origin of all Moro sections, we may assume that, at one time, the two orbits of symbiotic interdependence coincided. But there is no doubt that to-day the gulf between them is visibly widening.

Kindred

A glance at the kinship terminology of Tira and Moro suggests only a partial identity of the kinship structures of the two tribes. The kinship terminology of Tira, moreover, shows a closer affinity to that of Heiban-Otoro, while the Moro terminology contains several new features.

	Tira	*Moro*
Grandfather (pat. and mat.)	*urno*	*uteri*
Grandmother (pat. and mat.)	*urno*	*opu*
grandchildren	*urno*	*yereŋata*
father	*detay*	*eten*
mother	*lengay*	*lenen*
father-brother (his wife)	like father (mother)	like father (mother)
father-sister (her husband)	like mother (father)	like mother (father)
mother-brother (his wife)	*idore* (like mother)	*udereny* (like mother)
mother-sister (her husband)	like mother (father)	like mother (father)
son, daughter	*ora*, pl. *nwora*	*nere*
brother, sister (full)	*oray*, pl. *lorlay*	*leleunu*
brother, sister (half)	*oray*, or descriptive	*leleŋnu* or *orba*
father-brother's children	like brother, sister	like brother, sister, or *orany*
father-sister's children	like brother, sister	like brother, sister, or *orany*
mother-brother's children	descriptive	descriptive
mother-sister's children	like brother, sister	*narananany*
brother's son, daughter	like son, daughter	descriptive
sister's son, daughter	*idore* (like mother-brother)	*udereny* (like mother-brother)
husband	*imane*	*ebaneu*

	Tira	*Moro*
wife	*ugi*	*uši*
wife's parents	*uney*	*wunin*
husband's parents	*uney*	*wunin*
son's wife	*uney*	*wunin*
daughter's husband	*uney*	*wunin*
brother's wife	*eyay*	descriptive
sister's husband	*ibey*	*ebin*
wife's brother, sister	*ibey*	*ebin*
husband's brother, sister	*eyay*	descriptive
father's clan (collectively)	*umar* or *iyrdo*	*nyagar*
mother's clan (collectively)	*nyera*	?

Against some of the kinship relations in the above table I have placed the word 'descriptive'. This means that the particular relationship is expressed, not by a simple specific term like 'father', 'brother', &c., but by a composite term which 'describes' the nature of the relationship. For example, in order to indicate the relationship of half-brothers the Tira say 'brothers of one father'. The special term for half-brother, incidentally, is merely optional, both in Tira and Moro. The son or daughter of a mother-brother (called, in classificatory fashion, 'son' or 'daughter' in Heiban and Otoro) is called 'child belonging to maternal clan' in Tira and 'child of mother-brother' in Moro. The Moro make more use of descriptive terms than do the Tira: a brother's children are called, literally, 'brother's children', a man's sister-in-law 'brother's wife' or 'husband's sister', and a wife's brother-in-law 'husband's brother' (but also 'husband' for short).

The use of these descriptive terms reveals already certain essential differences to the kinship terminology of Heiban and Otoro. Unlike these tribes, the Tira and Moro do not regard the relationship between all the descendants of cognates of the same generation as identical with that between the cognates themselves (i.e. as a brother-sister relationship). They extend the term 'brother', viz. 'sister' only to descendants on the father's side (in Tira also to the children of the mother's sister). Omitting the children of a mother's brother from this classificatory relationship, they modify the principle of the 'identity of brothers' in the sense of a *more exclusive* recognition of patrilineal descent.

The Tira recognize the other three principles of identification which we discovered when examining the kinship terminology of Heiban and Otoro—namely, the (reciprocal) identifications of grandparents–grandchild, mother-brother and sister-child, and parents-in-law–children-in-law. The Moro recognize only the last two, and also have a different term for grandfather and grandmother. We discover that the different terminology stands for a fundamentally different social relationship. Visualize the locally united kinship group of Moro, revolving round the figure of an old

man called *uteri*—'grandfather'—and entrusted with the guardianship of ritual paraphernalia and clan magic: here the 'grandfather' is the head of the family; he demands respect and exercises disciplinary powers over all descendants living close to and, in a sense, under him; he often beats his grandchildren, and there can be no thought of that familiarity and pleasantness which characterize the grandfather-grandchild relationship in other tribes.

This, however, is the only instance of a correlation between (to us) new features in the kinship terminology and actual social relationships. The children of brothers and sisters, notwithstanding their terminological differentiation, are all equally defined as prohibited degrees in marriage. The in-law relationship with a brother's wife or, from the woman's standpoint, a husband's brother is identical in Tira and Moro (as well as Heiban and Otoro), marked by the identical rules of levirate marriage, although one tribe defines the two relationships by a common classificatory term while the other assigns to them different descriptive terms. The classificatory Moro term *ebin*, on the other hand, for a sister's husband and wife's brother, stands for relationships defined as identical by kinship etiquette.

This, then, is a first instance of kinship etiquette in these tribes, which again crystallizes in the familiar rules governing eating together. A Moro man must not eat any food prepared with grain (excepting beer) with his wife's clan or, if the marriage is within the clan, clan section. This avoidance is thus reciprocal between the two in-law relations who call each other *ebin*. The Moro believe that the penalty for eating with the in-law clan is a short, fatal disease which, after death, causes the skin of the body to peel. This Moro *tabu* which forbids a man to eat grain with the whole clan of his wife would be meaningless in Tira, where different clans are in any case forbidden to eat meat and grain with one another. Both Moro and Tira observe that severe and complete eating avoidance between children- and parents-in-law, which places a *tabu* even on seeing each other eat, which we recorded in Heiban and Otoro.

In Tira the relationship between a man and the male members of his mother's clan is marked by the following avoidance: when bathing together, they must not touch each other with their wet hands; nor must they rub each other with oil. This avoidance does not, however, obtain between persons of greatly different age—for example, between a boy and his mother-brother. The people cannot explain this avoidance; they only know that a breach of this *tabu* would cause a failure of the crops. We remember a similar avoidance between half-brothers in Otoro, which suggested a hidden jealousy and fear between the sons of co-wives. And we also remember a similar accusation of 'stealing the fertility of the fields' between maternal relations, dramatized in a harvest ritual in Heiban. The meaning of the Tira avoidance, so far as it lies on the surface, is clearly to exclude maternal relations from an intimacy otherwise natural and common among friends and age mates. If, underneath this surface meaning, there is again a hidden jealousy or fear (as I believe

there is), it must be in the nature of that antagonism which is rooted in the patrilineal clan system—namely, the jealousy and sense of loss of the maternal clan for having surrendered the woman and her fecundity to the group into which she married. Let me state, in conclusion, that the various kinship avoidances and rules of etiquette have persisted, unchanged, in the Tira districts which have come under Arab influence.

A Tira wife must not eat with her husband or his brothers until she has borne him several children or lived in his house for a number of years. Afterwards there is a ceremonial first meat-eating, which formally removes the clan barrier between husband and wife. Although this ritual act puts the seal on the clan adoption of the wife, this is, in practice, effective even before. For in the various clan observances linked with pregnancy and childbirth the wife must follow the rules of the husband's clan. When she dies she will be buried, again, in accordance with the clan rules of her husband. The Moro similarly perform this ceremonial first meat-eating two or three years after marriage, thus concluding the eating avoidance between the newly married wife and her husband and brothers-in-law. But the wife is bound all her life by the food *tabus* of her own clan. She owns, moreover, the *kamradha* magic of her clan, and I have recorded concrete cases in which married women were said to have practised the ('active') *kamradha* of their clans of birth. But here the rules are fluid. For with regard to the 'automatic' *kamradha* magic it is also maintained that, when a wife has been married for a number of years, the 'house will know her', and the protective magic vested in the husband's clan will be extended to her also. The difference between Otoro and Heiban with regard to the kinship position of wives thus repeats itself to some extent in Tira and Moro: like Otoro, Tira recognizes the complete adoption of wives into the husband's clan, and, like Heiban, Moro recognizes only a partial, incomplete adoption. This incomplete adoption, however, is expressed in different terms of reference in Heiban and Moro, true to the different make-up of the two cultures. If, in Heiban, it was framed in the *leitmotif* concepts, sex and procreation, it reflects in Moro the dominant features of that culture—clan avoidances and magic properties.

The rights and obligations vested in kinship and clan membership can be extended to strangers by means of a formal adoption. Both Tira and Moro used to adopt young and pleasant-spoken slaves, who had been either captured or purchased, into family and clan. A childless Tira or Moro might buy a young slave from his captor specially for this purpose. The formal adoption would take place a year or two later, when the family had had time to convince itself of the good character of its member-to-be. The adoption took the form of a sacrifice and communal meal, in the course of which beer mixed with the blood of the sacrificed animal would be drunk by the family and its new member, and the family head would address the gathering thus: 'This young fellow is now like my son. When I die he shall inherit my property. He shall live in

my house. There is no longer any difference between us: he is like my son, and like your brother; he is our clansman.'

In Tira we find the same institution of blood brothership which we described for Heiban. The Tira blood brothers call each other *tongodho*, which means, literally, head of a he-goat. This name is derived from the part of the animal which blood brothers eat together ceremonially, adding some blood of the animal to the meat, when concluding the blood brother pact (though, notwithstanding the name, other animals or parts of animals equally serve this purpose). A man can have only one *tongodho*, and their relationship is in every respect, i.e. with regard to marriage rules or eating avoidances, that of real brothers. The Tira share with Otoro the institution of the *nmar* exchange in the case of homicide and the adoption into clan and family which this exchange entails. Finally, the Tira also practise the kind of adoption which the Heiban people call adoption by a 'father of the bride-price'. Young men whose families are unable or unwilling to procure their bride-price may let themselves be adopted by wealthy men who have no sons of their own. A special adoption ceremony is performed which corresponds closely to the ritual establishing blood brothership. The adoption, however, is more complete than in the pact between blood brothers. It is known as *libiti oray*, 'marriage of a (real) brother', or, again, as *nmar* 'adoption', and makes the adopted individual a full son or 'brother' in the new family and a full member of the new clan. This adoption does not seem to be very frequent; my informants remembered only five cases in the last twenty or thirty years.

We have seen that the kinship terminology of Tira and specially of Moro restricts the specific classificatory kinship terms to patrilineal descendants and marks off matrilineal descendants by the use of circuitous descriptive terms as 'not belonging'. This strong emphasis on patrilineal affiliation is clearly in harmony with the paramount importance of the clan in these tribes, where every aspect of life appears dominated by the clan principle. Yet the 'bilateral' principle of the kindred is not completely ousted; there is still a balance between patrilineal and matrilineal elements, though it is strongly weighted in the favour of the former. In sacrifices and religious ceremonies, both maternal and paternal relations take part and share in the meat of the sacrificial animal; in one of the important clan rites of Tira, the first-fruit ritual of the eating of new beans, the mother and sister of the family head are assigned decisive roles in the ritual proceedings. Clan exogamy is extended to the mother's clan, and the mother-brother contributes to and shares in his sister-son's bride-price. Again, children are given a 'mother's name' at birth, which marks the order of birth of children of the same mother. Homicide in the mother's clan is treated like homicide in one's own clan; we shall see later that, in order to avoid the risk of the latter in the dangerous tribal sport, stick-fighting, men of the same clan are forbidden to meet each other in stick-fights; characteristically, this prohibition is also

extended to the mother's clan. Finally, we find in Moro the typical counterbalance to the emphasis on maternal influence—couvade.

Marriage

The majority of men in Tira have one or two wives, and a considerable proportion (*about 12 in 100*) *more than two wives. In Moro the large* majority is monogamous. The Tira intermarry with Otoro, with the arabicized Tira sections in Mande, and partly even with neighbouring Arab groups, though marriage outside the tribe remains on a small scale. In Moro marriage with other tribes does not seem to occur, and even marriage between different hill communities is rare, with the exception of intermarriage between the mother community (e.g. Umm Dorein) and emigrant groups in another hill (e.g. Kororak). The exigent standard of virility cultivated in the tribal sports is reflected in the marriage ideals of the Tira and Moro women, in their deprecation of men who have shown themselves cowards or who are physically unfit. Such men, called *domere* in Tira and *kadinyilun* in Moro, may have great difficulties in finding a wife—an attractive one, at least—and cripples often have to remain single. As the Moro girls put it: 'How can I marry a man like this? If anyone attacked me, he would be afraid and run away. What sort of husband is this?' Rather to my surprise, I found that cripples who could not find a wife could yet easily find women willing to have (illicit) sexual intercourse with them. Women, I was told, would sleep with anyone; but they would never agree to having a child by a cripple. Again, this statement is ambiguous; it can clearly not refer to illegitimate children. Evidently, the women feel no physical repugnance towards cripples; nor do they fear the fruits of such a union in the biological sense; their concern is merely with the sociological aspect of marrying a cripple and bearing his legitimate child. Other disqualifications of would-be husbands are: leprosy, lunacy, sexual abnormality (i.e. homosexual leanings, which, incidentally, only the Moro language distinguishes from mere 'unmanliness'), and finally, the disqualifications involved in exogamy and incestuous or pseudo-incestuous relationships.

Of the exogamous rules, which forbid marriage both in the paternal and maternal clan (or clan section) we have already spoken. The remaining prohibited kinship degrees can be reduced to a simple formula: all marriage between the agnatic and cognatic relations for whom special kinship terms exist is forbidden. The category of incestuous degrees thus includes besides classificatory brothers and sisters, parents and children, also parallel as well as cross-cousins on the mother's side, to whom one refers by descriptive kinship terms. The last prohibition is extended over two generations, i.e. the actual cousins as well as their children. Though it is no longer enforced in the third generation, some families consider the relationship still too close and 'are afraid' to permit marriage even between the grandchildren of cousins. An additional rule forbids two brothers to marry two sisters, or two sisters to marry the same man, even after the

sister who married him first has died. The Moro also forbid a man to marry two wives of the same clan (or exogamous clan section)—a prohibition which the Tira do not recognize. Neither tribe permits marriage with the mother-brother's widow.

Actual marriage in a prohibited degree is out of the question, for the families concerned would never permit such a flagrantly incestuous union. Nor is incestuous sexual intercourse in the narrow sense of the word (between 'real' parents and children or brothers and sisters) admitted ever to occur. Both Moro and Tira admit, and fear, incestuous dreams. If a Moro man has often dreams of this kind, he would feel as though he 'were going mad', and would perform a sacrifice to rid himself of these nightmares. But this extreme fear is caused only by dreams about real incest, with a sister (the Moro deny ever dreaming about incest with the mother); to dream about sexual intercourse with a classificatory sister or mother, or a sister-in-law, while still shameful and bad, calls for no expiation, and one might even talk about it jokingly to the woman in question, which one would never do in the case of real incest dreams. The Tira perform no sacrifices or expiatory rites, and do not think that the incest dreams have any meaning; but they are bad and shameful all the same, and one would never mention them to anyone, quite unlike ordinary sexual dreams, which, in fact, are considered rather pleasant experiences.

Incestuous sexual intercourse with classificatory brothers, sisters, or parents and other prohibited kinship degrees, or incestuous adultery—for example, with a brother's wife—are crimes which, though ghastly and unnatural, do occur. The people conceive of neither supernatural nor legal sanctions of these moral delicts. All that the kinship group can do is to warn and abuse the culprits, and to prevent the illicit relationship from becoming a permanent, legitimate union. I have said above that some families 'are afraid' even to countenance marriage in the slightly ambiguous prohibited degree of cousins twice removed: but they are 'afraid' of nothing concrete; it is merely the vague, abstract fear of allowing something that is palpably wrong. I have recorded only one incest case, in Tira, which occurred, not between ordinary classificatory relations, but between relations by adoption. A certain Kodilla, an ex-Government chief and a man of wealth and high standing, had committed adultery with the wife of his foster son, whom he had adopted under the rules of *libiti oray*. The people were horrified: here was a thoroughly 'bad man, afraid of nothing': but no action was taken. The foster son severed the connexion with his adoptive father and returned to his own family. He tried to take his wife with him, but failed; she continued to live with her 'father-in-law' for one year, and then married another man. The foster son equally failed to recover the two children she had borne him, who were claimed by their 'grandfather', Kodilla. But here everyone agreed that Kodilla was fully within his rights in refusing to give up the children. For in breaking the ties of adoption their biological father had

forfeited his sociological parentage. The fact that incest had been committed did not, in the opinion of the people, alter the legal issue.

Neither Tira nor Moro know of any positive marriage rules, past or present, which lay down preferential marriage connexions between different clans or different kinship relations (disregarding for the moment widow marriages).

I may mention here a certain puzzling marriage custom in Moro, which bears to some extent on this point. Two old men whose marriages were blessed with daughters only will sometimes exchange their girls and marry each other's daughter, in the belief that this reciprocal marriage will give them sons. It is a real, not merely a nominal, marriage; the old men must still be in full possession of their virility. But the girls would deeply resent this enforced marriage to old men, and quite recently two of these unhappy brides killed themselves.[1] The institution reveals the appreciation of male offspring. But why men who have failed to produce male progeny with their own wives should become able to do so by marrying each other's daughters is not clear, unless there is behind it a vague belief that two failures of this kind somehow cancel out, or that, by some mystic law of compensation, the male seed which was dormant in one generation must reappear in the next.

When he is fifteen or sixteen, the young man of Tira or Moro will begin his courting. Boys and girls have plenty of opportunity of meeting and getting acquainted—at dances, at the wells, where the girls draw water and the boys water the animals, on the fields, where they work side by side. Both tribes appreciate a quick courtship: it rarely lasts longer than two months, and a fortnight's courting is by no means rare. During this time boy and girl exchange small gifts. The boy presents his future bride with beads, ochre, and feathers for her head-dress or (in Moro) hare's teeth for a necklace; the girl retaliates with beads or a ring. Finally, when their minds are made up, the suitor formally asks the girl's father for her hand. Fathers may look at the suitors with slightly different eyes from their daughters. The girls love a strong, plucky fellow and good fighter; fathers ask for a steady young man, who has proved himself a good farmer rather than a champion in the tribal games. Often fathers will force their daughters to marry the kind of man they (the fathers) have in mind. But if everything goes well, the girl's father will give his permission and accept a first, small instalment of the bride-price (two to three goats). Now the boy and girl are formally engaged. The girl will be twelve or thirteen by then, and live in her parents' house or (in some parts of Tira) in the girls' hut.

[1] An official investigation into these suicides led to the prohibition of the institution by Government order. The prohibition was endorsed by a suggestion that this marriage custom represented an innovation in Moro culture. I can produce no conclusive evidence either for or against this supposition. Old men remember cases which happened thirty to forty years ago, and this is about as far as their memory will go in the case of an institution like this emergency marriage, which functions at long and irregular intervals.

At first there is little change in their relationship. The Tira suitor will now visit his bride in her parents' house (which would have been very 'bad form' before), in the evenings or at night, for a chat and the usual innocent sexual play. His attentions must not, during this period, go further. If the girl stays with her family, she will sleep in the same hut with her mother, which should effectively curb the impatience of the bridegroom. In the girls' hut her age mates will chaperon her. But both safeguards fail occasionally, to the anger of the parents and the shame of the girl. The Moro bridegroom may visit his betrothed only in daytime, in all respectability. If he somehow manages to see his girl by night and sleep with her, this would be severely frowned upon, and if the bride becomes pregnant, her father may even forbid the marriage which has begun in such immoral fashion. In one case, which I recorded in Umm Dorein, a girl tried to kill herself and her illegitimate child when her father forbade the marriage on these grounds.

With the engagement, the young man has acquired the right to exact fidelity from his bride, even to the extent of forcing her to renounce innocent flirtations and the familiar sexual play, and to defend his marital prerogatives, such as they are, against would-be rivals. During the coming years he will collect his bride-price, paying it off instalment after instalment, and work every year on the farms of his future father-in-law. The engagement lasts as a rule until the girl is considered sexually mature. Now the Tira bride leaves the girls' hut, or ceases to sleep with her mother, and moves into a separate hut, which her father will prepare for her in his house. In doing this the girl's father expresses his tacit agreement to the consummation of the marriage. In theory this step should not be taken until the bridegroom has completed the bride-price payments; but in practice—to-day, at any rate—the father-in-law is nearly always ready to make concessions if the young man has been unable to produce the full (and nowadays rather high) bride-price by the time the girl is fully mature. The father-in-law knows very well that the young people would decline to wait any longer, whether or not they have his blessing. A kinship ceremony, comprising a sacrifice and beer feast, precedes, and legitimizes, the consummation of the marriage. The young man will visit his bride in her hut and stay overnight. There is nothing clandestine about his visits now, though shame forbids that he should be seen entering the house of his parents-in-law on these delicate errands openly, in daytime. The bride stays in her parents' house until she has her first child, or for one year after the consummation. Then, after another ceremony, she will move into the new house which her husband has in the meantime prepared. Formerly, when the bride-price was considerably lower than it is to-day, and the marriage was consummated after the bride-price had been paid over in full, the bride joined her husband immediately after the birth of the first child. Nowadays this final phase of Tira marriage has been made conditional upon the completion of the bride-price. Often, in fact, the refusal to let his daughter

and her child join his son-in-law is the only means by which the bride's father can hope to hasten tardy bride-price payments. It is a very effective means; for it would be most shameful for a man to have his infant grow up in his father-in-law's house. On the other hand, fathers are much more anxious to-day to have their daughters move early into their husbands' house; if the bride-price has been paid over, the girl's father would even let her join her husband before she had her first child or before the statutory period of one year is over. The explanation is that, if a bride died while still living with her parents, her father would have to refund the whole bride-price, which, I was told, is a much more serious affair to-day than it was of old, when the bride-price was low and easily procured.[1]

In Moro the permission for the consummation of marriage is signified in a different fashion. The father of the bridegroom visits the girl's parents and suggests that the girl is now fully grown and that it is time she had children. Her parents will agree, and the young man will now change his daytime visits to visits paid at night. Again, the legitimacy of marital sexual intercourse does not exclude a feeling of shame associated with these visits of the husband. They must be paid at night, so that 'people would not see where he goes'. In the fourth or fifth month of pregnancy, the bride will get ready to move to her new home. Her husband will have built a house and paid the last instalment of the bride-price. When the bride's father has received this final payment, he performs a sacrifice and arranges a big beer feast for his family, and five days later the bride is taken to her husband's house.

Both in Tira and Moro one of the symbols of married status is the cicatrization of the bride. The Tira perform this operation after the bride has joined her husband, the Moro during the last five days which she spends in her parental home.

We note that the bride-price payments mark two phases in courtship and marriage: the engagement and the first establishment of (still platonic) marital prerogatives; and the final domestic union of husband and wife. In Tira the completion of the bride-price is (or was) linked with the consummation of marriage. But this link was not, apparently, strong enough to withstand economic changes. As in Heiban and Otoro, then, the consummation of marriage appears only as one in a series of phases, the first of which establishes sexual possession (in the widest sense), and the last of which is associated with the birth of the first child.

The intervening bride-price payments follow no strict order; nor have the various instalments a specific meaning or are known by special names (save the initial payment in Moro). Both in Tira and Moro the modern bride-price is much higher than the bride-price which was customary, say, two generations ago, and also comprises a much larger number of

[1] To give a concrete example of the proportion of marriages according to the old and the new custom: in the case of a man of about forty who had four wives only his first wife stayed in her father's house till the birth of the first child; the other three joined their husband as soon as he had finished paying the bride-price.

articles that must be purchased. The Moro will tell you that, of old, there was no bride-price; this, as I shall show, is untrue and belongs to the realm of tales told in so many societies of the 'good old days'. It will be best to illustrate the bride-price by concrete examples. The Tira call the bride-price *eto*, lit. goats; but the bride-price includes a large variety of gifts of widely different nature and value. Take the traditional bride-price first. A certain Urende, who is now sixty or seventy and who married at a time when his people still lived up on the top of Tira el Akhdar, paid the following bride-price: thirty goats, ten spears, two axe heads, thirty cakes of tobacco, two gourds of simsim oil, three cowhides, two knives, thirty headloads of grass for thatching, three headloads of heavy and one of light timber for roofing. He paid the total in the course of four years. Calculating, for the purpose of comparison, the modern exchange value of this bride-price (disregarding only the gifts of grass and timber, which it would be misleading to calculate in money), we arrive at a total of £8. This appears to be an average bride-price, for I have recorded both a much lower and much higher traditional bride-price (amounting to £6 and £11, respectively). A certain Alabina, on the other hand, who married in 1938, paid forty goats, two cows, one gun, thirty spears, and twenty cakes of tobacco, or, in money, £27. He paid the whole bride-price in the course of one year. This is the highest bride-price I recorded; but a bride-price amounting to £24 or £25 is quite common, and a bride-price of about £18 was positively, or, rather, apologetically, declared to be exceptionally low. In the example of the modern Tira bride-price just quoted, the traditional items, like loads of grass and timber, cowhides, gourds of oil, have disappeared completely. The change from traditional to modern values is not always as radical; mostly it is limited to minor changes in the composition of the bride-price (bottles of oil bought in Talodi market replacing gourds of home-made oil, an Arab gown taking the place of cowhides).

Traditional or modern, the bride-price includes the obligation of farm labour on the land of the prospective father-in-law. Once every year between betrothal and final payment the son-in-law must mobilize his family and friends, thirty to forty men and women, for this obligatory 'in-law work'.

The other, more strictly financial contributions of the family to the bride-price of its junior members (their first bride-price, to be exact, for in subsequent marriages the family contributes nothing) are small and uncertain. Young Alabina, whose bride-price we quoted above, received one cow from his father; the rest of the payments he found himself (chiefly by working as a labourer in Talodi). In another case a young man who paid a bride-price of ninety goats, one cow, thirty spears and various small items, received only ten goats from his elder brother and four spears from a father-brother (his own father being dead). In a very large number of cases, both of modern and traditional bride-price, the bridegroom must find the whole bride-price himself. The share of the

family is, on the other hand, fully recognized in the distribution of the bride-price received for a daughter or sister. A certain man, whose daughter had married with a bride-price of (mentioning only the main items) sixty goats and one cow, divided the whole sixty goats among his brothers (real and classificatory), keeping only the cow and the minor items for himself. Another father, who received thirty goats, one cow, fifteen spears, &c., divided the goats among his brothers, giving four to the bride's mother-brother, kept two spears himself, gave again four to the bride's mother-brother, and the rest to his sons.

There is thus very little reciprocity between the contributions which relatives make towards the bride-price of a young man and their share in the bride-price brought into the family by a bride. But the principle of reciprocity reappears in the payment of the bride's dowry: the same relatives who received a part of her bride-price are expected to contribute to her dowry. The dowry is called *almal ayalo ore anana*—the 'wealth taken into the house' (of the husband). This is a typical (modern) instance: the dowry consisted of two goats, one pig, eleven big baskets of grain, one big basket each of maize and groundnuts, two big baskets of beans, one large gourd of simsim, two gourds of beer. The total value is approximately £3 in money—that is, about a seventh of the average bride-price. The girl's father contributed the largest part of the dowry; four brothers of the father contributed each one basket of grain, and the girl's mother-brother contributed a fifth. In addition to the dowry proper, the bride also brings a stock of firewood into the marriage (collected by herself) as well as clothing (self-made) and household utensils (a gift of her mother).

We turn to the bride-price of Moro, which is known as *dhola*, i.e. 'wealth'. Only the initial betrothal gift, of two to three goats, is referred to by a special name, *ora*, 'goats'. With the exception of this first gift, the whole bride-price is as a rule paid over in one. The traditional bride-price, which was paid when men who are now sixty or seventy married their first wife, amounted to eight to ten goats, one pig, five to eight spear-heads, one pot of oil, and ten to twenty cakes of tobacco. Its money value would be to-day between £2 and £2 10*s*. It is interesting to note that even this small traditional bride-price contained certain items which had to be purchased, i.e. obtained by exchange, namely the tobacco, which is not grown in Moro, but had to be procured from Tira Lomon, and the spear-heads, which were bought from the Arabs. This is an average modern bride-price, paid a few years ago: fifteen goats, two pigs, ten spear-heads, one pot of oil, twenty cakes of tobacco, or, in money, about £3 10*s*. The highest modern bride-price I recorded was worth nearly £4, the lowest considerably less than £2. The 'in-law' farm work of the bridegroom and his family and friends, which is again included in the bride-price obligations, is on a much larger scale than in Tira; it involves six obligatory labour services (the last one, during the harvest, concerns only women) every year until the bride-price payments

have been completed and the bride has moved into her husband's house.

The family's contribution to the (first) bride-price of a young man varies considerably. In a number of cases (past and present) the bride-groom must procure his own bride-price. Sometimes he will be helped by his brothers, who might supply four spears out of fifteen, or five goats out of ten. Sometimes, again, the whole or nearly the whole bride-price is put up by the young man's father or brothers. The distribution of the bride-price received for a daughter or sister follows stricter rules and embraces a larger section of the family. The pig which forms part of every bride-price is killed by the girl's father for the ceremonial family meal which takes place shortly before the bride joins her husband. The oil is kept in the house of the bride's father till the day of her confinement, when he will send it to her so that she might use it to anoint herself and the infant. Of the other bride-price goods, the father will as a rule keep the tobacco and one to two goats and spears. The remaining goats are distributed among the bride's brothers, and the spears among the father's brothers. We note that the mother-brother is excluded from this distribution.

The Moro, too, have a dowry. It is produced entirely by the girl's father, with the exception of pots and gourds, which are contributed by the bride's mother. The dowry, which varies to some extent with the economic position of the father, consists as a rule of one small pig and one basket each of grain and simsim. Its value is 60–70 piastres—that is, a third or fourth of the value of the bride-price. Moreover, the cost of the bride's cicatrization (one big goat, paid to the woman expert who performs the operation) is borne by her father and not, as in Tira, by her husband.

Even in the low Moro bride-price the variations are, as we have seen, considerable. They reflect, above all, the economic position of the young man as well as of his father-in-law; the latter will often agree to a lower bride-price if he is himself a wealthy man and finds his daughter's suitor to his taste. He may, in turn, force the bride-price up to make difficulties for an undesirable son-in-law. If the bride-price that has been paid is low, both father and son-in-law will be anxious to explain the reasons to you, lest you suspect the attractiveness of the bride. Bargaining and haggling over the bride-price is common and does not reflect on the character of either father- or son-in-law. But it is considered very unfair if the girl's father were to break his promise to a suitor whom he has already accepted merely because another suitor might be prepared to make a higher bid. This 'breach of promise' is actionable in court; we remember a case of this kind which came before to Otoro-Tira Federal Court (*see* p. 162). Yet a Tira son-in-law who has been slow with his payments, who, for example, has not yet completed the bride-price when his wife had her first child, will always be afraid that her father might lose patience and marry her off to another man. The girls themselves, once they have become engaged, do not seem to change

their minds—at least, it is never admitted that a girl would do so of her own accord and in a purely platonic fashion, even if her prospective husband is generally agreed to be an unsuitable fellow or much too old for her. The sudden refusal on the part of the bride to fulfil her marriage promise is always assumed to be due to 'alienation of affection' by a rival. Cases of this kind are fairly common. Formerly, bridegroom and (suspected) paramour would fight it out. To-day the Native Court decides the case, which is treated, not merely as a ground for the dissolution of the marriage, but as seduction or, more correctly, adultery proper. The paramour is held to refund the bride-price (so far as it has been paid) to the bridegroom and, in addition, to pay a fine of £2 to £3 before being allowed to marry his love. Alternatively, girl and lover go to prison for as many months.

Let us examine the three aspects of the bride-price which we discovered when analysing marriage in Heiban and Otoro. The contractual aspect is much less clearly pronounced in Tira and Moro than in these other tribes. As we have seen, the corporate payment of the bride-price is on a small scale, and there is little reciprocity between contribution to and share in the bride-price. The distribution of the bride-price payments does, however, clearly define the role of the father, brothers, and, partly, father-brothers of bridegroom and bride as main witnesses (and guarantors) of the marriage contract. We shall see that these relatives are also held responsible for the bride-price refund in the case of divorce.

The significance of the bride-price as a 'price' paid for the woman's fertility is, on the other hand, clearly manifest. Both in Moro and Tira (at least modern Tira) the payments are so arranged that the final transaction is conspicuously associated with pregnancy and childbirth. Moreover, we shall find the same rules of widow marriage in force and the same legal principle, 'children belong to the bride-price', which we identified before as an expression of this aspect of the bride-price institution.

Thirdly, we mentioned the 'possessive' aspect of the bride-price, establishing the sexual prerogatives of marital or semi-marital status. Jealousy which is given free rein once the formal betrothal has established these semi-marital rights, violent fights over brides or wives, often provoked by mere flirtations, both protest this possessive spirit. But the sexual aspect of bride-price as well as marriage is much less overt. To talk about sexual experiences, in or out of wedlock, is in very bad taste, both in Tira and Moro, and sexual shame cloaks even the legitimate visits of husbands to their bride's house in the secrecy that normally attaches to not quite respectable actions. In Moro, moreover, the main bride-price transactions and the main step in marital intimacy, consummation, are completely divorced. So they are, to-day, in Tira, though this is not true of the traditional institution, which bracketed bride-price and consummation of marriage. It seems that a definite moral attitude corresponded to this association of bride-price with marital intimacy, and that it still lingers in the sex morality of the tribe. For the two tribes differ considerably in their

attitude to chastity. The young men of Moro care nothing about prenuptial chastity; there exists not even a platonic appreciation of the virginity of brides. True, their elders severely discourage and punish premarital sexual intercourse; but they are concerned only with the anticipation of marital relations and, above all, with childbirth out of wedlock. In discussions with Tira men I gathered that they bitterly resent unchastity in a bride; a husband would abuse and beat a bride whom he discovers to be no longer a virgin—though he would rarely care to make his shame public by complaining to his parents-in-law. Loss of virginity does not, then, wreck a marriage or break up an engagement. But it seems no accident that the Arab-influenced sections of Tira have so readily adopted that most severe safeguard of virginity—the pharaonic female circumcision.

Indeed, the Tira believe in premarital continence of both sexes. More catholic informants would admit that the young men, specially if they marry late, 'want women'; but in their opinion these young men should satisfy their desires with married women, 'by theft', rather than seduce girls. Of the two crimes, adultery and unchastity, the former is evidently the more harmless. The whole sex morality of the tribe seems guided by this principle of the lesser evil. If one cannot prevent premarital sexual intercourse of the young men, one can at least try to protect the chastity of girls; and if this, too, fails, one must do one's best to keep the sins secret. The girls of Tira (as of Moro) live fully up to these accommodating standards: they are all experts (or what passes for experts in the Nuba Hills) in procuring abortion or preventing childbirth.

The Tira belief in moral equality of the sexes precludes that male monopoly of moral righteousness which is tacitly accepted in so many societies (primitive or otherwise). Girls and women are neither too shy nor ashamed to accuse their menfolk openly of philandering. To wit, this amusing song sung by the young men at a tribal dance:

> Koci, Koci and Kuki [all girls' names]—these girls sit in the court. They are telling fibs [about the faithlessness of their husbands or fiancés]. An aeroplane is coming. It counts the girls, and rises up again [presumably to return and punish the girls unless they mend their ways].

The aeroplane, I must explain, is a new tribal bogy, which dates back to the unhappy days of the punitive expeditions. Here it is invoked by the indignant young men to frighten their all-too-egalitarian girl-friends and wives-to-be.

The final question arises why two societies so closely akin in social structure and marriage rules should differ so widely in the value of the bride-price which they accept. Three different factors seem to have played a part. First, the much higher level of economic production and partly standards of living in Tira. I do not mean production only in the narrow, accepted sense of the word, but also in a wider and mo unorthodox sense, which includes the large-scale raids on livestock in which the Tira always excelled. Secondly, the cultural life of Tira is

dominated by that motive of display and, partly, destruction of wealth of which we have spoken before. A high bride-price fits logically into a culture of this kind, in which enhancement of prestige is the paramount thought. Thirdly, there is the physical fact of sex ratio. The higher scale of polygamy in Tira must upset the balance of sexual (or marital) supply and demand. It is likely (though I have no figures to prove it) that the history of the two tribes in the last three or four generations has added weight to this last factor. For the Tira were subject to constant attacks and slave raids by the Arabs, which were more often raids on women and children than on men, while the Moro tribe, secure on its large and inapproachable mountain plateau, suffered comparatively little and could steadily increase its population.

Widowhood and Parentage

In the rules governing annulment of marriage through death of the bride consummation is disregarded; once more it represents only a minor phase 'in a series of phases', and does not define, legally, married status. Both in Tira and Moro, the bride-price, or what has been paid of it, is refunded to the husband only if the bride died before she moved into her husband's house. If there is a child (which could only happen in Tira, where the bride joins her husband after the birth of the first child), it belongs to its father and will be brought up by one of his sisters or possibly a co-wife.

Only two other grounds for the refund of the bride-price are recognized: remarriage of a widow outside her late husband's family and clan, and divorce. We find again the modified levirate which we described for Heiban and Otoro. Widows who are still young enough to find another husband are expected to marry a brother or at least clans-man of their late husband, without bride-price. The pressure of public opinion is (or at least was) much stronger in Tira than in Moro.[1] But a widow who dislikes the proposed marriage is still free to marry any man she likes, who would then refund the bride-price to the brother of her late husband—the same brother who also takes charge of the orphaned children. Widows bring no dowry into the second marriage. In Moro the original bride-price must be refunded *in toto*; in Tira, the minor bride-price items, e.g. the grass and timber for roofing, the gourds or bottles of oil, are deducted from the bride-price paid for a widow. Middle-aged widows, moreover, who are no longer physically attractive, would remarry at a greatly reduced bride-price (incidentally, another instance of the link between bride-price and the sexual aspect of marriage). The fecundity of the woman, past or future, does not enter in the refund calculations in either tribe. Widows who have passed child-bearing age will remain unmarried, staying in their husband's house. In Moro, this means living close to one's married sons and the brothers and other relatives

[1] I have been told of a Tira man who, some fifteen years ago, killed his sister when she rejected the levirate marriage.

of the husband. An old Moro widow who is childless or who dislikes her in-laws would leave her late husband's house and return to her own family and clan—the links with which, spiritually at least, she has never severed completely.

Widows must not re-marry for at least one year after the husband's death, though it is true that 'bad', shameless women bother little about this rule and often remarry already after three or four months. During this year the widow stays in her late husband's house, and any child she might bear in this period, whether it be a posthumous child or the fruit of an illicit relationship, is legally his. During this time, too, her husband's brother—her potential second husband, that is—will look after her and her children. If she marries him in levirate afterwards, she might move with her children into the new house which he would build for her, or she might prefer to stay in the old house; in the latter case her second husband, if he is already married, would divide his time between the two households. If the deceased had two or three wives, the same brother may marry them all. No distinction is made between half- and full brothers. But as a rule the eldest surviving brother has the first claim on the widow or widows. If, for example, the deceased had two brothers and three wives, the elder of the two brothers might marry two of the widows and the younger the third.

The widow who does not marry in levirate leaves her old home for the house of her second husband as soon as he has paid the bride-price. The two are not supposed to have conjugal relations until then; if they had, and if the woman became pregnant, the unborn child would still be legally a posthumous child, belonging to the family of the deceased. The grown-up children of the widow in the first marriage stay behind in their father's house, looked after by their father-brother—their 'sociological' father. The widow would take her small children with her and keep them until they are big enough to join their other brothers and sisters or the family of their father-brother. For this temporary adoption the widow's husband may reimburse himself by deducting one goat from the bride-price he has to pay. Girls sometimes stay with their mother till they marry. But they would invariably be married from the house of their 'sociological' father, who would also receive the bride-price for them, and, in turn, equip them with their dowry.

Divorce

In divorce the full original bride-price must be refunded to the ex-husband without any deduction. Unlike the bride-price for widows, the bride-price refundable in divorce is claimed, not from the new husband, but from the woman's father, although in practice the former often makes himself responsible for it. The financial settlement entailed in divorce is unaffected by the question of guilt or initiative: the refund of the bride-price to the ex-husband represents merely the contractual counterpart to the dissolution of the marriage. There is sense in

emphasizing this point, for in Tira and Moro the initiative in divorce suits is not practically a prerogative of the women, as it is in Heiban or Otoro. Men will divorce their wives because they are 'bad women', incorrigible thieves or adulteresses, but sometimes also for reasons which are far from convincing. In a court case which I witnessed in Tira a wife, afraid that her husband planned to divorce her because she had shown herself an indifferent housewife, requested the court to protect her and reprimand her husband. And in Moro a man who had been married to his wife for a long time and had four children by her drove her from his house and divorced her for no reason at all: this, at least, was the view of other people, who had in vain tried to dissuade him and finally gave him up as a hopeless case.

We need not go more fully into the details of grounds for divorce or divorce proceedings. The situation is almost exactly that described in the chapter on Heiban and Otoro. Again, divorce represents a traditional practice, frequently invoked. The occasional adultery of a wife, though it might be prosecuted in or out of court, is not considered a sufficient ground for divorce. If, on the other hand, a wife leaves her husband and declines to resume marital relations, or a bride refuses to honour her pledge, the husband or bridegroom at once search for the paramour, whom they would charge with 'alienation of affection'. Children born of an illicit union 'belong to the bride-price', i.e. the legal husband can claim all children born or even conceived by his wife (if her pregnancy is sufficiently advanced to be visible) until he has received the refund of the bride-price. Again there is no discrimination against illegitimate children. In Moro I was told that a man whom his wife presents with a bastard might, in his anger, send her back to her parents and refuse to keep couvade for the child. The child's grandfather will have to observe couvade instead. But, having made this gesture, the husband will be quite ready to take back the child—and sometimes even the mother—and pursue the matter no further.

Certain deviations from this common divorce law are due to peculiarities in the marriage customs of Tira and Moro. There is, first, the Tira adoption through which young men without means can secure their bride-price. If the adopted son divorced his wife against the wish of his family-by-adoption, the bride-price would be refunded, not to him, but to his 'brothers' or 'father', who could also claim the children of this marriage which their wealth has made possible. A second instance is this: if a Tira husband delayed the bride-price payments even after his first child was born (admittedly a rare occurrence), until his father-in-law grew impatient and gave his daughter to another suitor, the bride-price would be returned and the child handed over to the natural father. A final instance concerns the refusal of stern Moro fathers to let their daughters marry an immoral man, a man who was too impatient to wait for the paternal consent to the consummation of the marriage. A child born of this union belongs to the natural father, although, at the time,

MORO HILLS THE VILLAGE UMM DOREIN

PREPARATIONS FOR KINSHIP FEAST IN HIRA

STICK-FIGHTING TOURNAMENT IN TIRA

WRESTLING TOURNAMENT IN TIRA. THE CHAMPION IS CARRIED ROUND IN TRIUMPH

he would not yet have paid his bride-price. This, then, is the lesson which these exceptions to the general rule teach us (and which, in fact, was explained to me in so many words by a Moro informant): only where the principle of sociological parentage, established by bride-price, cannot be adduced does the tribal law fall back on the claims of biological parentage.

Inheritance

Here we can be brief. The Tira system is an exact copy of that of Otoro, and I need only recall the main points.

The main heirs of land, livestock, food stores, and house are the sons who, at the time of the death, were still living with their father and had not yet founded families of their own. If there are no sons, the brothers (real or classificatory) of the deceased inherit. In the last resort a sister-son may step into the patrimony. A brother of the deceased will act as trustee for small sons. The widow is entitled to the usufruct of a plot of land and the food stores until her remarriage. The personal belongings of a man are divided among his unmarried grown-up sons or, if the sons are too young, taken over by their father-brother; the latter will as a rule later return the spears of the deceased to the sons. If the deceased had begun to pay bride-price for himself, one of his brothers will either complete the payments and marry the bride or claim a refund of the payments already made. Outstanding bride-price payments for a daughter are taken over by the brother of the deceased who acts as trustee and foster-father.

Certain of the personal belongings of a woman—her beads, her ceremonial axe, one dress—are placed on her grave when she dies. The rest, together with household utensils, is divided among her unmarried daughters.

Let me add that, although the rules are somewhat fluid, disputes over inheritance are extremely rare. We may state also that the Tira have no superstitious fears to use or wear the personal belongings of the dead.

The Moro rules of inheritance differ considerably from the Tira regulations. Land, first: the far farms of the deceased go to the eldest son, irrespective of whether he is married or not. He is, however, expected to divide the land and to allot smaller tracts to his younger brothers. The house farm is inherited, with the house, by one of the as yet unmarried sons. The personal property of the deceased is divided among his brothers, and must never be inherited by his sons. We remember the same rule in Heiban. It is significant that in Moro as in Heiban the personal belongings of the dead must be ritually purified before they can be taken over by the heirs. Indeed, as we shall see, the common rule of inheritance reflects a common fear and superstition. The property of women, finally—personal belongings, household utensils, and the single pig which formed part of their dowry—goes to their sisters.

Moro men often make a will before they die, designating a favourite son or brother as the main heir or excluding others from the inheritance. In Moro, too, disputes over inheritance, especially over the division of land, occur frequently, and often take a most violent form; brothers have been known to kill each other in quarrels over their patrimony. These two features of Moro inheritance must hang together. The existence of a will, actual or potential, must induce an element of uncertainty and arbitrariness into every settlement. The inheritance cannot be the clear-cut, unequivocal transaction which it is in Tira. It gives scope to doubts and queries, and thus invites disputes.

CHAPTER VII

TIRA AND MORO
(*continued*)

Adolescence and Adulthood

THE Tira share with the Otoro the system of regulating and canalizing adolescence. The age-grade organizations of the two groups are modelled on closely similar lines. Even the nomenclature is almost identical. It is impossible to say which is the original and which the copy. True, the Otoro derive their promotion ceremony from Tira. But the Tira age-grade system also bears a certain affinity to the regulation of adolescence in Moro. The Tira system appears, in fact, in some respects as a more elaborate and intensified version of the Moro system, which might well have been evolved under the influence of Otoro.

The Tira age-grade organization, called *lebit* (cp. the Tira word for stick-fights, *lebito*), has one grade less than the Otoro system, and age-grade life starts later. When boys are ten or eleven, they cease to sleep in the house of their parents and move to the cattle camps to look after their fathers' herds. A year or two later the boys have their lower incisors broken out, which operation is said to 'help growth'. At this age they are still known as *ora*, 'boys'; they will remain known by this name till, at the age of fourteen or fifteen, they join the novice age-grade. The beginning of age-grade life thus coincides with the attainment of full puberty; characteristically, it is commonly associated with the awakening of sexual desires ('the boys now want women'), and the first grade is called *narblata*, which means pubic hair. These are the age-grades and the age limits to which they correspond:

1. *narblata* (15–18).
2. *amucu* (18–21).
3. *deten rowora* (lit. 'father of the boys', 21–23).
4. *urno* (lit. 'grandfather', 23–26).

Again, the kinship terms borrowed by the age-grade system define relationships closely modelled on those obtaining between the corresponding kinship degrees—the stern disciplinarian's attitude of 'fathers', and the benevolent friendliness of 'grandfathers'. The single age-grade group is larger than in Otoro, being recruited from a whole hill community. Each Tira hill (*ain*) has thus its own *lebit*. Every boy who has reached the appropriate age joins the age-grade organization of his hill as a matter of course. But though acceptance into the age-grade system is thus compulsory and comprehensive, the promotion from grade to grade is not. Deformed or backward boys, or boys who in any other way

prove themselves unequal to the age-grade tasks, especially to the vigorous standards of the Tira sports and games, are kept back in the first grade for two periods of promotion. Afterwards they are allowed to rise normally through the higher grades, even though they may still lag behind their age-grade mates. They will, of course, bear this mark of backwardness all their lives; they will be spoken of deprecatingly as *domere*—weaklings, effeminate fellows. Yet they have also been shown sympathy and understanding; for, by being placed with normal boys of lesser age, the unfit and backward are saved some of the strain and disappointment of unequal competition. They may be despised and made fun of in adult life; but still they are offered a niche (however humble): they are not (as in Otoro) simply ignored.

The period of each age-grade is three years. The triennial promotion from grade to grade is elaborated in the ceremonial of the *naco*, with its race for the limestone with which the ex-novices paint their bodies, and is accompanied by the taking of new, adult names. The different grades also reflect significant changes in the general social and economic position of the adolescent. The *narblata* already helps his father in farm work, though he still sleeps out in the cattle camp. He is as a rule engaged to be married, but is not yet supposed to have sexual relations with his bride (or, indeed, with any woman). The *amucu* is mostly married in the full sense of the word, though he will not yet have a house and farm of his own and will still spend most of his time in the cattle camps. Not until he becomes *deten* will he build himself a house, where his wife and child will join him.

Similarly, the different grades are assigned different roles in age-grade life itself. The communal farm work falls to the boys of the novice grade, who are efficiently supervised and spurred to give their best by the 'father' prefects. The main sport of the novices is wrestling, that of *amucu* and *deten* fighting with sticks and shields. The novices are the protagonists of the gay mummery of the *tirú* dance; the heroes of the *nabodha* dance, of whose more reckless appeal we shall hear more, are *amucu* and *deten*. The 'grandfathers' no longer join in sports and dances, but act as referees in the stick-fighting contests and as organizers of important age-grade events.

Boys from different grades address each other formally by the name of the grade to which they belong. They carry emblems of their rank, which they guard jealously. The *amucu* wear iron rings on the upper arm; both *amucu* and *narblata* carry sticks decorated with fringes of goat's hair; if they met a young boy who does not yet belong to an age-grade and who made himself a stick like theirs, they would take it away and break it in two. The *tirú* dance, especially, is an occasion for displaying age-grade distinctions in the style of dress and body decoration: the novices are painted white all over, they wear rattle-strings round their legs and little horns (goat's horns or the thin ends of bottle-gourds) and plumes of feather-grass tied to their heads. The *deten*, unpainted and more

soberly garbed, wear rolls of cloth tied round chest and back; they carry twigs, which they use from time to time to freshen up age-grade discipline. The *amucu* appear in their everyday outfit; but their undress is as much an age-grade prerogative as the elaborate masquerade of the *narblata*; once I saw a number of novices try to join the dance unpainted and undressed: they were evicted promptly and shamefully.

The Tira age-grades have no special 'club' huts like the Otoro, where they would meet regularly for drink parties or meals. Dances and sports altogether overshadow in Tira these merely 'social' activities. Age-grade life in Tira follows a rigid seasonal time-table. In May and June it is concerned mainly with the work on the fields, and there are no dances or ceremonials to distract from the utilitarian efforts, save an improvised wrestling match after the farm work. July is the time for the wrestling matches of the novices. The *amucu* occasionally join in the wrestling, but on the whole play the part of onlookers who have outgrown such puerile games. In August and September the stick-fighting of the year begins. These first fights are largely limited to the single age-grade group; occasionally the age-grades of two neighbouring hills meet in an informal match in one or the other village. The boys of the novice grade in the meantime practise stick-fighting in the privacy of the cattle camp, not with heavy sticks and real shields, but with light sticks and practice shields made of palm leaves. From time to time they are allowed to try their hand in stick-fighting at a specially arranged match, to be trained in this difficult and dangerous sport. At the end of September or October the great tribal stick-fighting tournaments take place, in which the different age-grades are strictly matched and local teams fight for the tribal championship. In October, too, the dancing season begins, inaugurated by dances called *bnegi* of the novice and 'father' grade; girls watch, but do not yet join in these dances. The mixed dances of boys and girls, *tirú* and *nabodha*, begin in November and last till February. They concern, above all, the *amucu* and *deten* and, among the girls, those who are already betrothed. Somewhat paradoxically in a society which lays so much stress (at least in theory) on premarital chastity, the protagonists of these dances, in which sexual attraction and sexual play have a considerable part, are newly married young men and girls promised in marriage. November-December are the months of the all-tribal wrestling tournaments in which, as in the stick-fighting tournaments, local teams meet each other. In the years which see the triennial promotion ceremony, the calendar of age-grade festivities leads up to the climax of the *naco*, which is celebrated in March-April. In other years the age-grades are kept somewhat in the background during the last two months of the year, being eclipsed by the festivities which surround the promotion and rise in status of adults.

Let me say a few words about the wrestling and stick-fighting tournaments. They represent more than merely age-grade events and occasions for the tribal youth to display skill and courage. They also represent

occasions on which the whole tribe realizes and affirms its unity. For the annual wrestling tournaments (called *lebolo*), the six hills of Tira are divided in two groups, each comprising three hill communities whose local teams will meet each other in the tournament. Thus Kalkadda, Jokhob, and Dordo fight one another, as do the hill teams in the other group, Kora, Loro, and Kattei. In each tournament, which lasts one day, two local teams are matched against each other. True to the spirit of fair play, the two local teams meet each other twice, first in one and then in the other hill.

On the appointed day large crowds assemble to watch the game—men and women, adults and youth (older people are not very interested in wrestling matches). They arrange themselves in two semicircles facing each other, which represent the two hill communities whose young men are fighting that day. But many visitors from other hills also come. The boys of the senior grades, who act as stewards and referees, carry sticks and twigs to drive the pressing crowd from the arena or threaten combatants who ignore their orders. They wear a dress as varied as it is colourful: aprons of goatskin, tassels of goat's hair, feathers, bells tied round the waist, and pieces of coloured cloth tied to wherever pieces of cloth can be tied. The wrestlers, more soberly and businesslike, are stripped and smeared all over with ashes. There is much more going on than just wrestling. When not engaged in a fight, the wrestlers are hopping about, singing and dancing. Others are blowing gourd trumpets and beating drums. Everything seems to happen at once. The age-grade prefects pick out the fighters and send them into the ring, watching every step, shouting encouragement, ready to interrupt the fight if one or the other plays foul. When one of the wrestlers throws his opponent, a delighted shout comes from his people, or appreciative laughter if he did it by a clever trick. When a wrestler has been successful in several fights or defeated a powerful opponent, *amucu* and 'fathers' rush into the arena and form a solid ring around him, yelling and singing. He kneels down, a sheep skin with a slit in the middle—the coveted wrestler's trophy—is dropped over his head, he is lifted on the shoulders of one of the senior boys and carried in triumph round the arena. The Tira are good losers, too: the defeated wrestler quietly retires and sits down among his friends and age mates, waiting for another chance. The competitive spirit is not allowed fullest scope; nor is the idea of individual championship allowed to supersede the thought of team and community. There are no 'finals' in which the individual winners are matched against each other for a last, decisive fight. When the tournaments are over, one is content to sum up the position by stating, say, that 'this year Kalkadda had two champions and Dordo only one'.

In the stick-fighting tournaments (*lepido*) everything is on a larger scale. The crowds are bigger—old men, too, keenly watch the game—and the excitement of the audience is more intense. So is their anxiety: mothers, sisters, and brides follow anxiously the phases of the fights.

The attention is concentrated on the contest and the distractions of drumming and dancing are ruled out. Only two opponents, each from a different local team, are allowed in the ring at the same time. The fighters carry heavy sticks about a yard long, which they use much like swords or sabres. In the left hand they carry a heavy, round shield made of coils of thick grass ropes. A small round guard of the same material protects the right hand. In the left the fighters also carry a spare stick in case the other stick breaks or is dropped in the course of the fight. The young men of the 'grandfather' grade act as referees; again they pick out the fighters and send them into the ring, carefully matched according to age-grade as well as size and physique. Young, inexperienced fighters often go into a clinch when the fight has hardly begun, reverting to the more familiar wrestling technique, only to be at once separated. Accomplished fighters swagger and strut around to show their unconcern, execute feints and parades, tease and provoke the opponent till, suddenly, they are hard at each other, aiming heavy blows at each other's heads or bodies. Blows 'below the belt' are forbidden and considered 'fouls'. Often the fight, so jocosely begun, ends in a contest fought with fury and grim determination. As soon as blood is drawn, the referees stop the fight, but it is not always easy to separate the fighters, who have bitten themselves into each other like fighting dogs. The bleeding combatant is led from the ring, and his age-grade fellows try to stop the bleeding by pressing the edges of the gaping wound together and smearing sand on it. Interference from outside is deeply resented. Once I saw an anxious mother breaking through the crowd to take care of her badly wounded son: she was driven back with shouts of ridicule, and the son himself turned his back on her, ashamed that he should be treated like a little boy. When the fighters are exhausted they leave the scene to the novices, who, with an improvised wrestling match, will conclude the programme of the day.

There are, essentially, no victors and defeated in this contest. To have stood up well and braved its risks is sufficient proof of pluck and hardihood. Indeed, a fatal end to this dangerous combat is not uncommon. Twice during the last two years a boy was killed in the stick-fight. This explains their restriction to boys who belong to different clans both on paternal and maternal side, so that at least the fearful risk of a clan crime should be excluded. The age-grade captains, moreover, would never allow weaker boys or boys as yet unskilled to join the combat.

Again, the tribe is divided in two groups for the annual contest, one comprising the hills of Kalkadda, Dordo, Loro, and Kattei, the other the two hill communities Kora and Jokhob. In stick-fighting, unlike in wrestling, the two divisions themselves meet in the combat, the various local teams within each division being allowed to fight with one another only in the more informal or improvised matches which take place throughout the dry season. The annual tournament lasts only one day and takes place at Konyoro, in the northern part of Tira el Akhdar.

Tira hills perform their *naco* separately, one after the other. When one hill has concluded the ceremonial of the first ten days, the next hill follows, always in this sequence: Kora, Jokhob, Dordo, Loro-Kattei (these two hills perform the ceremony jointly), Kalkadda, Mande. Tribal integration is thus reduced to the observance of this strict order of precedence. *It is interesting to reflect that the local distribution* embodied in this already traditional sequence is only two or three generations old. Whether, before their dispersal, the Tira had a common tribal *naco*, or whether the Otoro, when adopting the rite, have also intensified the aspect of tribal integration (being much more in need of such an embracing integrative agency than the closely knit Tira tribe) is impossible to say.

The *leitmotif* of age-grade life, the display of manly virtues, also dominates the life of adults and the rise in status open to them. We find a counterpart to the Heiban *nirowa* and Otoro *narma* in the Tira ceremonial called *orco*, which similarly establishes prestige merely by economic effort, i.e. the killing of bulls and other livestock for the sake of an impressive feast. But the Tira ceremonial seems less purposefully planned (the bulls killed are not, as in Heiban and Otoro, specially fattened animals), and altogether of little significance in tribal life. In fact, I have been unable to record a single instance of its celebration. Men enhance their prestige, above all, through undergoing cicatrization. The Tira and Otoro cicatrization rites are identical in almost every detail; even the nomenclature is nearly the same: the Tira call the cicatrization *nwuri* (*nwole* in Otoro), and the woman expert who performs it *evarto* (*barto*); the emblems of the cicatrized men, the horsehair fly-switch and the necklace of cowrie shells, are again known as *leper* and *emaro*; and the men who pass through cicatrization attain the name and status of a *romoco* (*dermoco*). The test of endurance is slightly less severe in the Tira version, for the operation is performed in two sittings, with an interval of at least a fortnight in between. At the first sitting arms, shoulders, and thighs are treated, at the second the rest of the body. The second operation is called the 'real' and 'big' *nwuri*, and it is on this occasion that the bulls are killed and the great dances performed, often accompanied by an informal stick-fighting match of the young men. But the first operation, too, entails a feast, the giving of gifts and the slaughtering of animals, which makes the Tira cicatrization considerably more expensive than its Otoro counterpart.[1] In Tira, incidentally, it has become the fashion to shoot the bulls which are killed at the 'big' *nwuri*. This innovation was explained to me as being due to the fact that the Tira select wild and pugnacious animals, which it would be

[1] These are concrete instances of the costs of three *nwuri* ceremonials which I witnessed in Tira: two bulls, fifty-seven goats; three bulls, twenty-six goats; two bulls, thirty goats. The number of cicatrization rites performed annually varies widely with the general prosperity. In 1938, not a prosperous year, there were nine new *romoco* in Kalkadda; the previous year, a leaner year, saw only two new *romoco*; in 1936, a very prosperous year, sixteen men underwent cicatrization.

dangerous to approach with spears only. Yet an innovation it undoubtedly is, and as such reveals an interesting change in the conception of courage and hunting skill.

The Tira perform cicatrization at a much earlier age than the Otoro. The average age of a new *romoco* in Tira is only thirty-six to forty. This means that the Tira *romoco* stands a much greater chance of collecting another fortune for the one he has spent than does his Otoro brother. But the Tira man is also looking forward to the opportunity of spending it again in the attainment of another, final, enhancement of status. This highest tribal rank is called *urdhini*. It entails what must be a unique practice in Africa—namely, the circumcision (*auridhin*) of old men. There is no rule as to the time that must elapse between the attainment of *romoco* status and the investment with this highest rank. It is determined exclusively by economic factors; the *romoco* will merely wait till he has collected the two or three bulls and ten to twenty goats which he must expend on the celebration of the *urdhini* circumcision. The shortest interval which I recorded was six years; but as a rule it is considerably longer, often nine or ten years. In other words, one undergoes circumcision at the age of fifty or more. The operation is performed, not by a special expert, but by some old man who has the necessary experience (there are a good many of them), and who is paid in beer, meat, and fowls. The circumcision takes place only once every three years, in the same year in which the *naco* is celebrated. The extremes of adolescence and adulthood, the promotion of the novice age-grade and the elevation to the status of 'old men', are thus conspicuously linked. Like the *romoco*, the *urdhini* carry emblems of their status: a ceremonial throwing knife, called *arnger*, and a tall bamboo stick the top of which is carved in the crude likeness of a bull's head. The stick, cut by the *urdhini* himself, is carried always. The throwing knife is kept in the house and only taken out for ceremonial occasions. The new *urdhini* either orders himself a new throwing knife from the Arab blacksmiths at Ngortu or Mafluh, south of Tira, or takes over the throwing knife of another man who is too old to need it any longer.

No Tira festivity or ceremonial is complete without the presence of the local *urdhini*. There you will see them, mostly dressed in Arab gowns and coloured turbans, carrying stick and throwing knife; they sit in a group by themselves, drinking beer; occasionally they get up, and perform on rather tottering legs a few dance steps, to the great amusement of the crowd. Their status implies no stiff, aloof dignity. Indeed, they have passed the stage in which old age means authority, prestige, and leadership. The man who has become an *urdhini* is regarded as nearing his second childhood. The religious ceremonies of clan and tribe, the various consultations on the affairs of the community, are tasks entrusted to the *romoco* of the group, never to the *urdhini*. The attainment of this highest status is at once the termination of social usefulness.

Here we discover, I believe, the meaning of this practice of circumcising

old men. It is perhaps inevitable in a society which lays so much stress on virility that the loss of physical vigour in old age should be identified with the loss of social usefulness. The circumcision itself marks this transition by the most striking symbolism possible. The mutilation of the sex organ seems nothing else but a demonstration of the loss (or impending loss) of virility.

The age-grade system and largely also the *romoco* rank remained unaffected by Arab influence. Only in Tira Mande is the *romoco* institution disappearing, and only old *romoco* are left who underwent cicatrization years ago. But the *urdhini* institution is being depleted everywhere of its meaning by the encroachment of Arab culture, which entails, on an ever-increasing scale, the introduction of juvenile circumcision. In Arab-influenced Kalkadda and Dordo we find many old men who have reached *urdhini* age, but had been circumcised as boys. They have not abandoned the idea of that final ceremonial and enhancement of status. But they realize that what remains of it is merely, in their own words, 'the killing of bulls and the making of beer'.

Juvenile circumcision was possibly first introduced by Tira men who returned from Arab slavery, at least superficially proselytes of Mohammedanism. The Tira sections which settled close to Arab groups were equally ready to be converted to the new custom. As soon as a few families had adopted the practice others apparently followed of necessity, in response to a social pressure which increased with the spreading of the custom and which, paradoxically, derived some of its urge from traditional customs. For the circumcised members of the community would not eat with the uncircumcised, and the latter were finding themselves excluded from many kinship and communal celebrations. In Mande, Kalkadda, and Dordo nearly every young man over sixteen is circumcised. In these communities circumcision is already fitted firmly in the calendar of tribal events. It takes place in February or March, and the father of the boy would make beer, kill a he-goat or even a bull, and arrange a family celebration which, in Mande, reaches quite considerable scale. The boys are normally fifteen to sixteen when they are circumcised. But even young men up to nineteen and twenty, afraid that they alone of their friends and age mates will remain uncircumcised, may decide on a belated operation.[1] In the other Tira hills juvenile circumcision appeared only two to three years ago, but is visibly spreading.

We have spoken before of the Tira conception of a moral equality of the sexes. The same idea also dominates the regulation of female adolescence. First, when the girl is eleven or twelve, her lower incisors are broken out. When she shows the first signs of approaching puberty—the filling out of the breasts—she ceases to sleep in the parental home

[1] Once in Kalkadda I had to lend first aid to a young man of perhaps twenty or twenty-one who had (*horribile dictu*) circumcised himself. His reason was that his friends were all circumcised, and he could 'eat with nobody'.

and moves into the girls' hut. There she spends her nights together with her age mates, free from supervision. This, at least, was the traditional practice. To-day these special girls' huts have disappeared in Kalkadda, Dordo, and Kora, having survived only in the more isolated and unsophisticated hills. The explanation of this change which the people vouchsafe is significant and convincing. Premarital chastity, which is—or was—so important to the Tira, was safeguarded in the girls' huts only as long as the girls' suitors would jealously watch over their fidelity. This one-sided defence of premarital morality was bound to lead to serious affrays between bridegrooms and their rivals. And when these affrays became potential legal offences, when the attempt to guard the fidelity of their brides might easily land impetuous bridegrooms in prison, the safeguard of chastity was apt to collapse. Mothers thought it safer under such conditions to have their girls sleep with them. Not that this measure proved more effective. 'After all, I am asleep at night', a mother confessed to me. 'How am I to know what tricks my girl is up to?'

With the onset of puberty the girls also join their own age-grades. Unlike the Otoro grades of girls, the girls' grades in Tira are regarded as seriously as the boys' organization. They comprise the same ranks as the age-grades of the boys. The girls join in the *naco* race and pass through a promotion ceremony which is tuned to the *leitmotif* of male adolescence—physical vigour. It is connected with the girls' counterpart to the male sports, the *lepido rore*, or 'stick-fight (with) whips'. The 'whips' are supple twigs of the *tibeldi* tree. The girls' contest, in which married women also join, takes place in the years of the *naco*, and the girls of the novice grade who prove themselves skilled and plucky fighters are promoted to *amucu* rank, while their more 'effeminate' sisters are kept back for another three years in the novice grade.

Let me add that, before girls are married—more precisely, before the marriage is consummated—they undergo a first, light cicatrization on arms, shoulders and thighs. Like the men who become *romoco*, they have to face a second 'big' cicatrization later, on back, chest, and belly; it is performed after they have moved into their husband's house. Until then the girls hold their age-grade ranks in their own right. When they join their husbands, they automatically adopt their husbands' ranks. Thus a girl who marries a *deten* becomes a *deten* (irrespective of her own rank in the girls' grades), and is later 'promoted' with her husband to the next higher 'grandfather' rank. Later still, if and when her husband becomes a *romoco* or, finally, an *urdhini*, the wife, too, is known and addressed by his rank. The wives arrange all-women parties of their own, with beer and food, singing and dancing, thus maintaining on their part the prestige of the family status.

The tenacity of this principle of sex equality is thrown even more strongly into relief by recent cultural changes. When the tribe began to undertake certain labour for the Administration—road work, the building

of rest houses, &c.—labour, that is, in which the women participated on a considerable scale, a special headship of the women evolved in response to this new need of organizing female labour. The head of the women is known as *ele kilgitila*, lit. 'chief of the women'. These female chiefs exist to-day in several Tira hills; they are in charge of all female activities, including the organization of traditional events, like women's dances or whip-fighting contests, and even undertake to settle disputes between the women. One local chief, however, claims the credit of having first introduced the new institution, only two to three years ago, for the special purpose of organizing female labour. This chief, Ali of Kora, appointed three women *romoco* (we note, again, the conscious copy of the men's system) as overseers of female labour on the causeway across the Kauda Khor. Whether his claim is justified or not (it is disputed by the people of Kalkadda, who explain the women's headship as an introduction from the Arabs), the success and spreading of the institution testifies to the strength of that belief in an equality of the sexes.

There is, too, female circumcision, which balances the adoption of the boys' circumcision. It is not (or not yet) practised on an equal scale: it is universal in arabicized Tira Mande, and has been adopted by a few families in Kalkadda. It has not yet penetrated to the other hills, although I was told by people in Kattei (in 1938) that they, too, intended to circumcise their girls. A number of men in other hills (e.g. Kora) have married circumcised girls from Kalkadda and Mande. But only in Mande do we find already the positive discrimination in marriage in favour of circumcised brides which is typical of Arab communities. I cannot go here more fully into the social, psychological, and medical implication of this custom. Let me only state that the girls are circumcised at the age of twelve to fifteen, that the circumcision is of the severe type known as 'pharaonic', in which the labia majora are completely removed, and that the operation is performed by a woman expert, without apparent ill effects. It is performed at the same time of the year as the boys' circumcision, often together with the latter, and similarly celebrated by a family feast and dances of girls and women.[1]

There is no thought in Moro of modelling the life of girls and women on that of the men or of prescribing parallel courses for male and female adolescence. Save perhaps in one respect: we find again the special girls' sport of the *lepido rore*. The Moro girls fight with real leather whips as well as with heavy iron bracelets worn on the left wrist. But though more severe, the girls' fighting in Moro, is, socially, less important than in Tira; the whip-fights take place irregularly, accompanying, as improvized sequels, the stick-fighting tournaments of the young men. Change of name, ritual events, and certain mutiliations mark off the important phases in the physical and social life of girls and women. The young girl is called *nere* till she reaches puberty. When she has passed through the

[1] We shall return to this 'borrowed' institution, which, in my view, is bound to strengthen its hold, in the more general context of Chapter XII.

ritual which surrounds her first menstruation she becomes known as *nwa*. About this time she will be betrothed and, when her bridegroom has made the initial bride-price payment, has her lower incisors broken out. The only reason which the people can give for this mutilation is that 'it looks nice'. In the fourth or fifth month of pregnancy, before moving into her husband's house, she is cicatrized. Finally, when she has borne her first child, she changes her name again, being henceforth known as *uǎi*, 'wife'.[1]

Male adolescence is divided in four phases: Small boys, up to the age of eight to ten, are called, like the girls, *nere*. Afterwards, till they reach full puberty, they are known as *lemi*. At this stage they leave the paternal home and live in the cattle camps. They also begin to practise, still in a playful fashion, the tribal sport—stick-fighting. At this age they have their lower incisors broken out. It seems significant that the identical mutilation is explained differently in the case of boys and girls. No less significant is the nature of the rationalization produced in the case of boys: it restates the Moro ideals of manhood, and the boys are said to undergo the operation to 'prove that they are no cowards'. The next phase lasts from four to six years. The boys of this age are called *adumo*. They still live in the cattle camps; they are the protagonists of the tribal sport; they have made the first bride-price payment and, towards the end of this phase of adolescence, have consummated their marriage. This phase comes to an end when the young man has a house of his own and becomes a father. A full adult now, he is called *itene*, and is no longer expected to take part in the games and other activities of the adolescents. This rule, however, is not very rigid. Men of thirty or thirty-five, who have already families of their own, equally join in stick-fights. But they fight only each other and never the *adumo*, who, younger and in better training, would prove an unequal match.

We see that these four phases represent fluid age groups, not sharply defined grades of an age organization. Their length is determined by the widely varying conditions of individual life, and not by any rigid general rules. Nor is there a ceremonial of promotion that would regulate and elaborate transition from phase to phase. Membership itself is not sharply defined. The various activities of the adolescents—games or dances—vaguely unite boys of the same or adjacent localities in the hill community. This grouping becomes more definite only where age-group events are co-ordinated with ritual events, in the *ereda* dance (to be described presently), and in the formal stick-fighting tournaments of the tribe. Here all young men from a clearly defined number of localities in the hill act as one group or form themselves into one team (*see* p. 180 and below).

Though not falling into a strictly periodical pattern, the phases of adolescence in Moro are not without a rhythm of their own—a rhythm which is also reflected in other ritual events. Every four years the Moro

[1] Let me add by way of a footnote and without comment that the Moro perform clitorodectomy on girls with a large, projecting clitoris. This 'disfigurement', clearly visible as the Moro girls wear nothing over their pudenda, is considered ugly and gives rise to ribald jokes—hence the operation.

celebrate a dance of the young men, called *ereda*, which marks the passing of the *adumo* stage. The *adumo* who join in it have, during this year, no longer taken part in stick-fights, and after the *ereda* they will consummate their marriage. Indeed, the consummation of marriage is conditional upon the previous performance of this dance. Should a young man ignore this rule, his wife would miscarry. Every four years, then, a batch of adolescents is accepted formally into the ranks of the adults. This 'promotion' does not, as we know, extend to all other age-groups as well. But the aspect of promotion and transition in this one group is strikingly pronounced. The *ereda* dance contains an element typical in many societies of *rites de passage*. It demands that the young men dress up as women. They do it consciously, and everyone is aware of this meaning of their masquerade. They wear chains of beads round waist and neck and rattle-strings round their legs, as the girls do in their dances; most significant of all, they paint their body with ochre, which in Moro is associated with an intimate physiological characteristic of the female sex, menstruation. Let me add that for a man to dress like a woman is normally regarded as an admission of sexual abnormality, and that the Moro homosexuals generally adopt female dress. For a short period, then, the young men about to be married identify themselves symbolically with those men devoid of normal sexual desire. The significance of their temporary transvesticism is abundantly clear from the context: it underlines the step which they are about to take; its exaggeration serves to throw into relief the transition from immaturity to full manhood.

The rhythm of adolescence and the motive of age fellowship elaborated in the *ereda* dance are preserved throughout individual life. Submerged for many years, they reappear in the rituals of the old men of which we have spoken before, the *runu* of Umm Dorein and the *ruparra* of Lebu. These rituals are bound up with specific clans (Bowru in Umm Dorein and Amruth in Lebu) only in the sense that men from these clans lead the ceremonial and decide when it is to take place. The old man in charge of the ritual paraphernalia of the Amruth clan possesses a certain magic gourd which he keeps tied to the roof of his hut, the rope of which breaks when it is time to perform the *ruparra* ritual. This magic signal, however, merely confirms what every one knows. The *ruparra* and *runu* rituals take place every four years, in the second year after the *ereda* dance, and the old men who form the congregation—they are about seventy—are age-mates who, in their youth, performed the *ereda* together. Men of fifty or sixty will reckon the time which separates them from the year of their *ruparra* (or *runu*) in four-year periods; they know exactly how many senior age groups will have to precede them until their turn comes.

These are the main features of the old men's ritual: old and young men together go out on a hunt; they are dressed alike, in the typical fashion of the young men, with bands of palm leaves tied round waist and legs. For four days the old men live and sleep with their young companions in the cattle camps. On the fifth day the whole community climbs up

CICATRIZATION IN TIRA. THE OPERATION

CICATRIZATION IN TIRA. THE NEW *TOMOLO* DANCES THROUGH THE VILLAGE

MORO STICK-FIGHTING TOURNAMENT THE OLD MEN OPEN THE FIGHT

MORO STICK-FIGHTING TOURNAMENT AT THE HEIGHT OF THE FIGHT

to the top of the hill to watch the end of the ceremony, a dance and mock stick fight, fought with twigs, of the old men.

Should an old man die before he had taken part in this rite, his son must do so instead, in the name of his dead father. But if the old man dies after having performed the *ruparra* or *runu*, his death will be a matter of little consequence. No one will bother much about his death and funeral, as indeed no one bothers much about the man himself once he has passed through that final ceremony of old age. Here, then, we discover two typical features of the Tira age-grade system. One is the identification of advanced age with the end of social usefulness (the age limit itself is higher in Moro, which is explained by the greater importance of old men as clan heads and spiritual leaders of the community). The other, the conspicuous linking together of early adolescence with the final phase of old age.

We turn, finally, to the tribal sport which Moro and Tira have in common, and which is associated in both groups with the same stage of adolescence. I was told that formerly the Moro also had a special sport, reserved for men who have passed *adumo* age—spear-fighting contests of the kind we find among the Korongo and Mesakin. I have myself seen old men still carrying the round shields and long ebony spears which were used in these fights. These contests are said to have been abandoned twenty or thirty years ago because they proved too dangerous, costing many lives and disturbing tribal peace with numerous blood feuds. Not that the Moro stick-fights are without danger. They are more severe and fought much more ferociously than the Tira contests. The Moro have heavy shields of cow-hide with jagged edges and pointed at the lower end which, when used in thrusts and jabs, become savage weapons. The severity of these fights, indeed, necessitates a special warning, voiced by the old men before each contest, to adhere to the rules of the game and to fight straight. These warnings say nothing about banishing rancour and hatred from the fight. Though in ordinary tournaments fighters who are known to be enemies will at once be separated, other combats are especially arranged to settle, in duel fashion, personal disputes. As in Tira, young men belonging to the same clan (not only clan section) on the father's or mother's side are not allowed to meet each other in these fights.

As in Tira, too, the stick-fights have their season. Informal practice fights start shortly after the harvest of the early grain. They are arranged within the local community, and their purpose is mainly to get the fighters back into training after the long interruption of the farming season. The serious contests begin towards the end of April. When the *adumo* of one cattle camp decide that it is time for a tournament, they send a young boy with a piece of palm-fibre rope round to the other camps. This message signifies that they will be ready for the fight in two or three days' time. Preparations begin at once. Milk and butter is collected, with which the fighters will plaster their body and dress their hair. The latter, specially, is a delicate operation. Young men who are clever with their fingers are entrusted with this responsible task. They pull up

the hair and twist it into strands, which are thickly plastered with wet clay till they stick out all over the scalp like the quills of a hedgehog. Finally the *coiffure* is plastered over with milk. A simpler hairdress is a plain cap of hardened milk moulded in a gourd. Mothers are busy soaking sheepskins in water and beating them with stones to make them soft; at the tournament their sons will wear these skins as protection round their legs. Milk *coiffure* and sheepskins are only two items in the bewildering variety of decorations and forms of dress in which the young men indulge on these occasions. Individual imagination is given free rein. All *adumo* wear thick rolls of cloth tied round chest and back. Some have horse-tails fixed in brass clasps—a cherished family heirloom—dangling down their backs. Besides, you will see every conceivable kind of ornament, old or new—chains, beads, coloured cloth, mirrors. Of more up-to-date decorations sardine tins worn round the waist are specially appreciated. So are cut-up petrol tins, which provide useful leg-guards as well as a dazzling headdress. This festive garb, selected and put on with much care, is a prerogative of the *adumo*. The younger boys who are not yet allowed to join in the fight must be content also with a more prosaic dress. A feather in the hair or a plain milk cap, a coloured scarf round the waist, are all they are permitted to wear.

On the day of the tournament everyone who can walk will go out to watch the fight. It takes place in a cleared space at the foot of the hill. The fighters arrive in small groups, each representing a local team. They march in with martial step, to the music of drums, brandishing sticks and shields, and take up position in different parts of the field. Surrounded by their own people, they stand at ease or busy themselves with last-minute preparations, waiting for the contest to begin. Eventually, things begin to happen. Two solid phalanxes are moving slowly towards each other from opposite sides, led and separated at the same time by groups of old men armed, like the young, with shields and sticks. When they meet, somewhere near the centre of the field, they halt for a preliminary consultation on the rules of the contest. It is never a mere formality. At a contest which I witnessed in Umm Dorein an endless controversy was started by the protest of the old men on one side against the too heavy garb and 'armour' of the fighters on the other. In the end they agreed that the two sides were not, after all, unfairly matched. Then an old man began exhorting the crowd: 'Fight fairly. Aim at the legs and not at the head.' Another took up the harangue: 'Let only those who are of the same age fight with one another, and not the younger and weaker with the older and stronger.' A third man voiced a final warning, to break off at dusk. One old man beat his stick against the shield of another—the typical Moro challenge. The two closed in, attacked and parried. It was only an innocent mock fight which they staged, but it gave the signal for the real fight to begin. In a few seconds the whole field was resounding with the yells of challenge and the clanging of stick against stick. Two, three, four, rings had formed,

closely packed with people and swaying this way and that with the violence of the fight that went on within.

These rings form spontaneously, local groups and teams are all mixed, their identity submerged in the excitement of the fight. A fighter who has defeated his opponent in one ring will swagger across to another ring in search of a worthy partner. One goes all out for defeat and victory, fighting until the opponent is sent crashing to the ground, and fighting with a grim tenacity against which the older men are helpless in spite of their sticks and spears, and though they use these liberally. The good warnings of before are forgotten. A well-meaning referee, even innocent spectators who have not kept clear of the fighters, may carry away bleeding wounds and broken fingers. The stick-fight which I watched was also attended by a thoughtful medical assistant from the nearby dispensary; but the young toughs, with blood streaming down their faces, refused to be treated. Normally, when the fighters are exhausted, they stop and leave the scene to the girls, who have appeared all equipped with whips and fighting bracelets. But this fight never reached this stage. When dusk was falling the local chiefs and native police tried to break up the meeting—in vain. Eventually, some old men asked me to drive the truck in which I had come through the crowd, which unorthodox means finally achieved the desired result.

The only rule never ignored in these contests is that only members of opposing sides must meet each other in the fight. In the first fights of the season the opposing sides represent the large local divisions within the hill community of which we have heard in the previous chapter. The fight just described was of this kind, though it was also joined (as it occasionally happens) by a visiting team from another Moro hill, Lebu. There are as a rule two or three such tournaments every year. Their number may be increased by stick-fights which have a purpose besides providing an occasion for the invigorating tribal sport. They are arranged when young men have quarrelled (mostly over a girl) and are burning for a fight. In these 'corporate duels' the usual division into local teams may be partly ignored and replaced by one into kinsmen and friends. These stick-fights are also less formal than the one I described and always a shade more ferocious. Yet their aim is clearly to lift the personal dispute to the level of the dispassionate group contest. The two rivals are allowed to fight with one another—under the rules of the game. Moreover, their fight will be only one in a series of combats some of which, at least, will be fought in the true spirit of a tournament.

The final sportive contest of the year is fought between different Moro hills. It lasts one day, and takes place when the first rains have already fallen and there is 'sufficient water for drinking'. Its site is a place in the plain north of Umm Dorein, roughly equidistant from the hills which join in the tribal contest. One is fought between Umm Dorein, Lebu and Kororak; another, separate, tournament, between Karbaj and Umm Gabrella. These contests thus only embrace the tribal sections which

are linked by a common ('symbiotic') clan system and recent cross-migration. They do not attempt, like the Tira tournaments, to unite the whole tribe. But, looking at the texture rather than the framework, at concrete co-activity rather than ethnic bounds, we discover that the co-operation of the tribal sports in Tira and Moro underlines identical social units (though their compass may differ)—namely, units defined by communal life and the consciousness of interdependence.

Political System

The symbiotic structure of Tira and Moro society already suggests where the political unit must reside. The sovereignty which we shall encounter is of that diffuse and abstract order which is typical of societies without a consolidated system of government. The realization of the 'common law' rests fully on the moral conscience of the group segments and on the 'self-help' of individuals and group sections. The boundaries which this concept of political existence describes are never obscure: they embrace the whole (or nearly whole) tribe.[1] The definition of 'friend' and 'enemy' is based on the unit of the tribe. Raiding, plunder, the taking of human life outside the tribe is fair, just and laudable.[2] To be robbed or killed in an intertribal affray is luck of war. But the same attacks on life or property within the tribe become crimes, outlawed and followed by retribution.

The Tira back this political morality with theological arguments. Let me quote from an illuminating discussion which I had with a number of Tira men. God, my informants said, is very angry when one Tira kills or steals from another Tira; but He is not at all angry when the Tira kill or rob outside the tribe. I: 'Have you then a different God from, say, the Otoro?' Informants: 'No, there is only one God (*elo*). He is the same in Tira and Otoro.' I: 'Yet still He is not angry when a Tira wrongs or kills an Otoro?' Informants: 'No, He is not angry when we kill an Otoro.' After a pause: 'Nor when an Otoro kills one of us.' The Tira Supreme Being, though not a tribal God, yet appears here as the epitome of the political unity of the tribe. He stands, in the Durkheimian sense, for the society conscious of itself.

The political solidarity of the Tira tribe is strongly buttressed by a threefold ring of co-extensive systems of integration. Political action, symbiotic clan interdependence, the unit of communal life and age-grade co-operation, all refer to, and bind together, the same group substratum.[3]

[1] In Moro the political unit leaves out the one aloof hill community of Ndere, which in the days of Arab raids is said to have sided with the Arabs against their fellow tribesmen (*see* p. 178, footnote).

[2] In the past young Tira men who planned a raiding expedition into 'enemy' country could quite officially solicit the magic assistance of the Itumbel clan (the clan possessed of the power of healing wounds caused by iron weapons). After a successful raid they paid one goat to their spiritual helper.

[3] Tira Lomon, outside the compass of communal life, but within the tribal-political unit, is an exception. Owing to the isolated geographical position of Lomon, however, the political link of this section with the rest of the tribe can have but little practical significance.

In Moro the political unit far outstrips the unit emerging from clan interdependence and communal life. It is interesting that of the two 'orbits' of symbiotic unity, the orbits of concrete co-operation and of theoretical, ideological 'belonging together', the political union should fasten on the latter. Yet it seems logical that it should be so. For even this abstract unity contains the elements of an at least potential interdependence which may, at any moment, become reality (for example, if one provoked the anger of a clan in another hill which possesses some unknown powerful magic, affecting the welfare of 'all the people').

Needless to say, the Administration could not countenance the traditional tenet: 'law within the tribe and lawlessness without'. The moral attitude which this doctrine expresses is tenacious and only slowly changing, often by circuitous ways rather than in direct response to administrative measures. This is true specially of Tira, where modern law and order has been slow to penetrate. During my stay in Otoro, a number of young men from Tira tried to kidnap some Otoro boys whom they found herding cattle near the tribal boundary. They only intended to take the captives to their hill in order to display their own valour and cleverness and then to release them. They were well aware that the time was past when one could make slaves; but their moral conscience did not rule out this, to them, innocent adventure, which contained all the moral values of the old exploits without their utilitarian element. In the dances performed in the course of the *romoco* feast the Tira men (like their Otoro brothers) still display the trophies gained in combats with the enemy. And in the *nabodha* dance the young men still recite their exploits, real or imaginary, in raiding the herds of Otoro or Arabs.[1] In this dance male pride and sexual stimuli are inextricably mixed. For by means of these self-praises the young men try to attract the attention of the girls who, standing in the centre of a ring formed by the young men, will pick out one or the other, and throw themselves against the partners they have chosen, their breasts touching the body of the man. It is here that we discover a subtle change in the traditional appreciation of manly valour. The boasts of the young men are apparently no longer an infallible means of gaining favour with the other sex. At a Tira *nabodha* dance which I watched in 1939 I recorded the following song, sung and composed by the girls:

Where is the young man Tutu? His friends [are asking] in order [to go with him] to steal he-goats. A girl [called] Kayra returns the gun. [She says:] with what is he going to marry?

The explanation of the song is as follows: Tutu was well known as an inveterate thief. He was engaged to the girl Kayra and had paid a gun as part of his bride-price. Now, the girls think that he is sure to be

[1] Much prominence has been given in official reports to this Tira dance, which was taken as evidence of the unruliness of this tribe as compared, above all, with the law-abiding Otoro. I have already stated that both tribes have this 'sinister' dance.

caught one day, and then he would have to ask his fiancée to give back the gun so that he could pay the fine and avoid prison. The girl will, of course, refuse to marry him, for 'with what is he going to marry?' The girls, my interpreter concluded, dislike nowadays this risky engagement to young men who cannot keep clear of the law. True, this change of mind refers to the more sober business of marriage rather than to the sexual play of the dance. But the fact that the song was sung at, and composed for, the *nabodha* seems significant enough.

A final instance illustrates even more clearly the impact of modern law and order on the traditional conception of tribal law. Tira raids on the herds of their Otoro and Arab neighbours had reached such a stage that the Tira chief recently ordered the old men of the tribe to lay a curse on all intertribal thefts.[1] The magic proved successful enough—this kind of theft ceased, but only to be replaced by a proportionate increase in internal thefts. From an administrative point of view, this was the lesser evil; the more dangerous intertribal frictions, at least, which threatened the peace of the whole district, were removed. To the people themselves it was without any doubt the major evil. They seemed greatly upset over this new lawlessness—a lawlessness which attacked the very foundations of tribal consciousness. During my last visit to Tira preparations were just being made to lay another curse on the theft of livestock, this time within the tribe. Of its final success I am ignorant.

The Tribal Code

The traditional legal code of Tira and Moro shows little that is new. *Property offences*, first. If the thief is known, the owner of the stolen property, helped by his family, will attempt to recover his property or the equivalent by force. If the family of the rightful owner is too weak to attempt this, it may enlist the support of the 'big man' of the community (of whom more presently), and with his help achieve the aim. But nothing is taken in excess of what had been stolen, and the helpers can neither claim compensation nor impose what would correspond to a 'fine'. The close association of tribal morality and religious concepts in Tira is reflected in the fact that in this tribe one is often content to leave the sanction of theft to supernatural devices. For thieves are believed to be killed by lightning—which belief is not shared by the Moro.

Matrimonial offences. A husband who discovers that his wife has committed adultery with another man will beat his wife, but take no further action, unless the infidelity is repeated and, above all, the wife decides to leave her husband for the paramour. The husband then collects his brothers and seeks out the paramour to fight him and his family (with sticks)—a procedure which promises success only if the

[1] This was done through the usual *lobo* ritual (*see* p. 191), performed for the fertility of the land and the women, and also, as we shall hear presently, for the discovery of unknown thieves. At this particular *lobo* the following spell was uttered: '(Whoever) eats (stolen) goats—God shall find him (i.e. kill him).'

husband's party is the stronger. If the dispute is over a girl and concerns young men, it will be settled by a formal duel between the young men belonging to the families or clans of the rivals. The two may, of course, already have opened hostilities on some earlier occasion when they happened to meet—on the fields, or at a dance. But this impromptu fight will at once be stopped by their age mates and relations, to be resumed later in the framework of the legitimate corporate duel. If the husband (as it often happens) is an adult who has to defend his marital rights against a much younger rival, the older man may delegate this defence to a young clansman. In Tira these duels are denied ever to lead to killing (unlike ordinary stick-fights). In Moro both the spontaneous fights over a woman or girl and the regular duels may end fatally (one case happened in 1939). In both tribes the final decision rests with the girl, whatever the outcome of the fight. She might remain faithful to her lover even if he had been beaten (unless he disgraced himself through cowardice), and the husband, his honour satisfied, would renounce his claims with good grace. If the husband is the weaker of the two, he will find himself in an unenviable position, being certain to lose both fight and bride. His relations and clansmen may, at least, save appearances. But if he is wise, he will not risk the challenge, but entrust his interests to the peaceful negotiations of the old men.

A young Moro, Alota, a poor fighter and something of a coward, discovered that his betrothed was flirting violently with another fellow, Azu, one of the best fighters in the village. Not unnaturally, he did nothing. But his father became very annoyed and declared openly in the village that things had gone far enough (incidentally, no actual illicit relation was alleged), that Azu was behaving like a scoundrel, and that he, the father, would teach him a lesson. Azu learned of this, went up to the old man's house and told him to mind his own business. The two quarrelled, and Azu used his stick against the older man. Now Alota had to take action. He collected his age mates from the cattle camp, friends and relatives—including relatives of the bride, who were on his side—and challenged his rival to a stick-fight on the morrow. He did badly in the fight; he and three of his relatives left the field bleeding from deep head wounds, while Azu's party won the victory and, presumably, the girl.

As stick-fights between clansfellows are forbidden, this self-help is ruled out between a husband and paramour who belong to the same clan. However, amorous relations with the bride of a clansman are an infinitely graver breach of the tribal code: they are severely discouraged and, if they led to actual adultery, regarded—like all crimes against the integrity of the clan—as surpassing human sanctions.

Homicide. Within the clan (paternal as well as maternal), it is the clan crime *par excellence*.[1] It is left to supernatural punishment, which takes

[1] Cases of this kind, even cases of homicide in the family, are recorded in both tribes.

the form of leprosy. No difference is made in this respect between the clan at large and the sub-clan or clan section. The Tira take no action whatsoever. The Moro perform the expiation rite known as *nmar*, which is demanded in the case of homicide between different clans, also after this clan crime. But opinion is divided as to its success, i.e. its ability to prevent leprosy. Some informants seem to think that it would be effective if performed at once. But fear and anger often delay it, and the people may refuse to sit down together for the common ritual until it is too late. Until the *nmar* has been performed, the members of the clan in which the crime occurred must not eat with one another, not even with their own families, which means that they must obtain all food from outside and eat in the houses of neighbours belonging to other clans. It is not clear whether the eating avoidance in this extreme form holds good also in homicide between different clan sections; according to some, it does; according to others, the eating avoidance in this case obtains only between the clan sections concerned, and not in the single section. However this may be, it is interesting to note that this same prohibition on eating with one's family and in one's own house before the expiation rite is also necessary after a suicide. The concept of clan identity could not be more strikingly expressed: to kill a clansfellow and to kill oneself are, morally, identical acts.

Homicide between different clans in Tira entails blood feud or, alternatively, the *nmar* exchange which we discovered in Otoro. Until the murder has been avenged and blood been taken for blood, or until the *nmar* exchange has been effected, the two clans must not eat or drink together lest leprosy befall them. The blood feud sets clan against clan; it demands exact retaliation and, once this is achieved, lapses automatically. The delicate *nmar* negotiations are in the hands of the old men of the two clans. The ritual which surrounds the final exchange is more complicated than in Otoro and more heavily fraught with magic symbolism. Thus when the two kinship groups, of the victim and the individual to be exchanged, meet for the common sacrifice they smear the undigested food taken from the bowels of the sacrificial animal over their bodies to ward off leprosy, which would otherwise follow the omission of revenge. As in Otoro, the exchanged individual must correspond to the victim in age and sex. The exchanged individual may be the murderer himself; always, he must come from the murderer's own clan—not, as in Otoro, from his maternal clan. The kinship fiction thus differs from that maintained in Otoro: the two families linked through the *nmar* call each other 'brothers' and, like the families of brothers, they are allowed to eat and drink together (which the Otoro families are not) and forbidden to intermarry. The more elaborate ritual which surrounds the exchange in Tira thus appears correlated with the greater intimacy into which the two groups enter after the *nmar*. But whether it is this thought which is expressed in the more elaborate expiation rather than the thought that here a member of the murderer's own clan, and not a more distant, maternal

relation, is adopted into the clan and family of the victim, I will leave undecided. We cannot say how blood revenge and *nmar* formerly compared numerically. But it is clear that the *nmar* exchange was an alternative in the full sense of the word, possible in every case and directly after the killing. We shall see that in Moro a similar alternative had to be delayed till revenge had first had its chance.

The passionate insistence on the integrity of the clan, which makes the Moro liken murder in the clan to suicide, also reveals itself in the severity of the blood feuds which spring up between clans. The first reaction after a killing affray is for the whole family of the attacker, men as well as women, old and young, to flee from their village to another hill, where they can hope to escape revenge. Only the murderer himself and his brothers or sisters (real or classificatory) need in theory fear revenge, for only their death would square the original death and redeem the guilt. But one knows that in the first anger the relatives of the victim might well attack and kill any member of the other family, regardless of the fact that this indiscriminate revenge would only start new blood feuds. After a few weeks, when tempers have cooled down, the fugitives, with the exception of the murderer and his brothers and sisters, will return home.

The whole clan of the victim is charged with the pursuit of the blood feud, but only the brothers are entitled to take life. If others were to capture one of the hunted men, they would take him to the brothers of the victim, who would then kill him with their spears. The Moro blood feud does not demand exact retaliation with regard to sex and age. The capture of a woman, a sister of the murderer, would equally terminate the blood feud; she would not be killed, however, but sold as slave. Sometimes, if one of the brothers is captured, one might also spare his life on the advice of the old men of the family; he would be kept prisoner for some time and then released on the payment of blood money.

If the fugitives escape capture for two or three years, the blood feud will mostly be allowed to lapse, and the old men of the warring families meet to open negotiations for the payment of blood money. The fugitives will still be in hiding when these negotiations start; indeed, some families might decline to abandon the blood feud even then, and another year or so must elapse till they are ready to accept the peaceful settlement.[1] The blood money, known as *anjit*, amounted formerly to two cows; it has now risen to six to eight cows. It represents an alternative to revenge, more precisely, to a revenge which has become impossible. If blood has been taken for blood, the blood feud lapses automatically, entailing no further acts of expiation save the final purification rite, which must equally conclude a blood feud settled by the payment of blood money.

[1] I have been told that some families might reject the blood money altogether, afraid that they would be punished with leprosy if they ate the animals from the enemy clan. They would, however, agree to the final expiation which terminates the blood feud. This might indicate that blood money is a more recent introduction. Information on this point, however, is obscure.

This purification rite, called *nmar*, is the second of two rituals known by the same name. The first *nmar* rite is on a small scale and takes place at the burial of the victim. The relatives of the killed will try to find an old man belonging to the murderer's clan who has not fled with the rest of the family. Together they go to the burial place; they kill a pig and produce a little grain, simsim, pig's fat, and milk. The blood of the sacrificed pig is mixed with this food and smeared over the body of the dead and over the body of the old man from the enemy clan. If, for some reason, the rite had to be postponed till after the burial, the blood is dripped on the outside of the grave. The meaning of this rite is to assure the dead that he will be avenged, and thus to placate his anger and prevent his spirit from sending leprosy—the punishment of families neglectful of the duties of revenge. If no clans-member of the murderer can be found, this *nmar* has to be postponed, and anger and resentment will be all the greater.

The final *nmar* ceremony unites the two warring clans, including the fugitives, who have by then returned. It takes place in some neutral place down in the plain. The actual rite concerns only the two families of murderer and victim, but the presence of the other clansmen is necessary to safeguard the peaceful performance of the ceremony; for the temper of the two families is still uncertain, and it falls to these other guests to quell outbursts of anger and prevent provocations and the renewal of hostilities. Each family brings a pig, some grain, simsim, beans, milk, pig's fat, and also a handful of earth from their village. The pigs are placed side by side; their throats are cut, and their blood is caught in the same gourd. A little grain and simsim is cooked with milk and fat; the food is mixed with the blood and earth, and each individual of the two families smears a little of it on his (or her) body. They all dip their fingers into the blood and snap fingers with one another. Finally, the two families and clans eat the meat and the rest of the food. Until the ritual has been performed the whole clans of murderer and victim are forbidden to eat together (or of food belonging to each other) at the penalty of leprosy.[1] The anointing with blood and earth finally lays this curse.

Let me add that the *nmar* rites are still performed, even though blood revenge has given way to official punishment. Thus, if the culprit is sentenced to imprisonment or is awaiting trial in prison, a portion of the magic mixture of blood, food, and earth is sent to him there. Not until this is done would the two clans feel safe to eat and drink together. Indeed, the rite of expiation is considered even more imperative to-day—but of this more later.

Neither Tira nor Moro acknowledge a right to revenge in the case of injuries which do not lead to death, though the family of the victim might feel itself bound to avenge the tort by inflicting a similar injury on the aggressor or his brothers. But it would remain an arbitrary, not

[1] This was the view held by most informants. Some maintained that the eating avoidance obtained only between the near clan relations, and not the clans at large.

legalized, act of vengeance. The difference between accidental and intentional killing is recognized only indirectly. In homicide which occurs in the course of stick-fights (of any kind) the Tira admit only *nmar* and never blood feud. In their semi-theological phraseology this is the only kind of homicide in the tribe which does not cause 'God to be angry'. In Moro the treatment of accidental killing is, in theory, the same as of murder proper. But the attitude of the victim's family would be markedly different: their insistence on revenge would be less obstinate, since their 'hearts would not be as hot', and mostly they would agree to accept blood money and perform the *nmar* expiation rite already nine months or a year after the death.

Oaths and Ordeals. We have already spoken of the clan-bound oaths and ordeals invoked in Tira—on iron implements of the Itumbel, Iltobo and Ltrngum clans. We have also mentioned certain forms of magic used to discover or punish unknown thieves. A Tira man who discovers that animals are missing from his herd and suspects theft, may seek the help of the Ltrngum clan—the clan concerned, among other things, with stray property. The complainant takes a fowl to an old man of this clan, who will tie the legs of the bird together and let it starve to death. When it dies the thief will die also. Another method is to appeal to an old man, a *romoco*, of one's acquaintance and ask him to arrange a *lobo*—not the clan-bound fertility rite, but its deadly counterpart, by means of which the community punishes a man who has secretly frustrated the *lobo* magic (*see* p. 193). Here this sinister magic is turned against the unknown thief. The *romoco* to whom one appealed convokes a congregation of old men of various clans and families at the usual *lobo* place. The owner of the stolen property supplies a fowl, which the *romoco* swings through the air, speaking thus: 'May God return what has been stolen.' Unless he repents and returns the stolen animals (plus a goat to be sacrificed at another *lobo*, which is to remove the curse), the thief will die. The publicity of the rite no doubt ensures a fair chance of success, in the sense that the thief would hear of it, become afraid, and make good his theft.

In Moro suspects are made to swear their innocence on iron objects—knives, axes, spears—and perjurers, one believes, will be struck by lightning. In petty thefts (of food, ornaments, or, more rarely, a goat) in which one has reason to suspect the hand of a woman, a special ordeal is employed. One enlists the help of a medicine-woman (*udhumi*), who will call together all the women who might come under suspicion and ask them to stretch out their hands, palms up. She fills her mouth with water, spills it over the hands, and grains of corn, or beads, or goat hairs (according to what has been stolen) will miraculously appear in the hand of the guilty woman.

The comparative poverty of Moro in tribal ordeals and forms of avenging magic is not surprising. We remember the *kamradha* magic which invests the Moro clans with this very power of avenging wrongs

and punishing people who wish one harm. We have called its more deadly variety a transition to witchcraft. In Tira the concept of witchcraft is more explicit—as explicit as witchcraft in the classic sense of the word is anywhere in the Nuba Mountains. It is called *ore*, and is sharply distinguished from other clan-bound magic. It exists in men and women, and is strictly hereditary both in paternal and maternal line: the children of witches are invariably witches themselves. Witches, it is said, can send death to people whom they have reason to hate. Their power works mysteriously, through channels about which nothing is known, and always in the dark of the night. Yet witches are few, so the Tira maintain, and their actions effective only when devoted to the retribution for a real (never an imaginary) wrong. Though just as moral as the Moro *kamradha* or, indeed, any avenging magic in the two tribes, Tira witchcraft, unlike these other forms of deadly magic, bears the stigma of an evil and hateful force. It is not difficult to see why it should be so. Witchcraft in Tira is an essentially irrational and even incomprehensible element. It denies the accepted, safe order of things; for it remains outside the Tira universe, which is a universe of clan loyalties and clan-bound causes and effects.

To be called a witch is thus a deep insult. At a session of the Tira Native Court in Kattei one woman (let me call her A) sued another woman (B) for having called her publicly a witch and accused her of having killed her (A's) first husband by witchcraft. B was severely reprimanded and threatened with a fine if she repeated the offence. The innocence of A was self-evident. If she had been a witch, the people argued, she would have been so incensed by this accusation that she would have turned her magic against the woman who insulted her. What more proof could one want of her innocence than the fact that she brought a case of slander instead? The logic may be faulty, but it is in keeping with the ambiguous concept of Tira witchcraft, which is both a means of retaliation and an agency of obscure and malevolent nature.

Modern Jurisdiction

The Tira Native Court is composed of the sub-chiefs from the different hill communities, and certain old men—*romoco* most of them—who act (rather irregularly) as 'court elders', and is presided over by the chief of the tribe. This court is convoked in one or the other Tira hills whenever there are cases. In addition, there is the Federal Otoro-Tira Court, which functions as a court of appeal and a forum for intertribal litigation. In Moro every hill has its own local court, composed of chief and sub-chiefs; a large tribal court sits every month at Lebu, attended by all the chiefs and sub-chiefs and presided over by the chief of Umm Dorein.

The control of disputes and litigations has almost fully passed into the hands of the Native Courts. All property offences are taken to the

court, which imposes fines or prison sentences and enforces the restitution of the stolen property. But disputes over inheritance are still largely settled in the family, as are also the affiliation cases which sometimes arise from the adoptions practised in Tira. The self-help of spontaneous fights and stick-fighting duels still continues to be regarded, in the case of young men, as the legitimate response to seduction and alienation of affection, in Moro especially. On the other hand, matrimonial disputes of adults (of men, that is, who could not as easily and naturally resort to combats and duels) are now increasingly entrusted to official jurisdiction. I have even seen petty matrimonial quarrels being taken to court: a Moro husband of rather excitable temper demanded the protection of his marital rights against a (much younger) rival, whom he could accuse of nothing more definite than of turning his wife's head; one Tira woman requested that her husband should be censured for having beaten her; another wanted the court to find out whether her husband's show of anger meant that he intended to divorce her. We have spoken of the legal position with regard to seduction, adultery, and alienation of affection. The attitude towards matrimonial disputes involving clan or kinship crimes—infringements of exogamy or incestuous offences—is as yet undecided. The case of 'incest' which we have mentioned before, of a Tira man with the wife of his adopted son, never came before the court. Another Tira case, adultery with the wife of a clansman, though regarded with the old horror, was readily entrusted to modern secular justice.

The most far-reaching changes have been with regard to capital crimes. Blood revenge, outlawed, has disappeared in Tira and is slowly disappearing in Moro. The claims of the law have been extended beyond the tribe and into the preserve of the clan. Homicide between tribes, in the tribe, and in the clan or kinship group are equally subject to the modern penalties of prison or death. The Tira of Mande, under Arab influence, are now accepting blood money in intertribal homicide (which means, in their case, mainly homicide between themselves and their Arab neighbours). Lately blood money has also been offered in homicide in the clan; but this custom has not yet taken root: in a recent case a Mande family refused to accept blood money from another family of the same clan. In the rest of the Tira tribe, this new form of redress is unknown. The inflicting of injuries is now actionable in court and entails (in Moro) the right to claim damages (referred to as 'blood money').

Intentional and accidental killing are today recognized as two distinct categories of homicide, commanding different penalties. In other words, the heavier or light punishment is no longer merely an expression of the varying feelings of bitterness and anger. In intentional killing, official jurisdiction and penalties must take their course; in accidental killing the tribe may claim the right to apply the milder alternative allowed for in its traditional system of justice—*vmar* exchange in Tira and blood money in Moro. It remains to be seen how widely or narrowly the new categories will be interpreted. The Tira seem to favour a rigid

and narrow definition of accidental killing.[1] A recent trial in Moro, on the other hand, would seem to prove that there killing in the course of corporate duels and self-defence definitely falls in the category of accidental homicide.[2]

It is the practice in Tira, after an *nmar* exchange, to make the family head of the victim swear that he is satisfied and that he would not renew the feud. I may add that a similar oath of reconciliation is demanded by the Native Court in the settlement of violent disputes which give rise to the fear that they might easily flare up again. In Moro such a smooth ending to blood feuds is as yet impossible.

Bitterness and anger are still potent factors; in accidental killing as well as murder the fear of revenge still causes the culprits and their families to seek safety in flight. The chiefs encourage this self-exile, which, now even more than of old, is to eliminate provocation and help towards the gradual softening of the hearts. We have seen before that the outlawing of revenge has not obviated the avoidances and rites of expiation that were linked with blood feud; nor yet, as we see now, has it deeply affected the background of sentiment. This uneven transformation has caused certain divergent trends to appear. The *nmar* exchange in Tira, formerly an alternative of revenge, is now an alternative of the penalty which has taken its place. It remained, in the abstract sense, the alternative of a more extreme retaliation. But in Moro blood money, though traditionally an alternative of the same kind, is now being accepted in all cases, including those in which the 'extreme retaliation'—the modern punishment—has taken its course. Moreover, the modern blood money is considerably higher than the traditional payment. It thus gains the significance of a compensation demanded and offered for the surrender of the right of revenge.

But the position has not yet clarified itself. Many families hesitate to accept blood money, at least soon after the crime, being afraid of leprosy if they ate of the flesh of animals that belonged to the enemy clan. Formerly the acceptance of blood money followed the voluntary abandonment of revenge and the dying down of hatred and bitterness. This would no longer be true. To accept the symbols of reconciliation merely because the culprit had been brought to justice might still be dangerous; the right of expiation might be ineffective while one still harboured anger and hatred. At the same time, the kinsmen of the culprit are now pressing for a shortening of the period which must elapse between the deed and the final expiation. Curiously enough, they are motivated by the same reasons

[1] The Tira chiefs recently laid down the rule (prompted, I believe, by the District Commissioner) that accidental killing in stick-fights should be recognized as such only in the proper annual tournaments, but not in 'corporate duels', nor yet in the irregular, unauthorized stick-fights which often accompany dances or other feasts.

[2] The case in question was this: at a dance a young man had been paying rather too marked attentions to a girl whom he knew to be engaged. When he walked home after the dance he was ambushed by the fiancé of the girl and his friends. They fought with sticks, and in the brawl one of the attackers was killed.

which make the kinship group of the victim hesitate to agree to an early settlement—namely, fear of leprosy. This rather puzzled me: it seemed to me that the two clans were reasonably safe if they observed the eating avoidances, as they had done in the past. But this is no longer so easy, I was told. The eating avoidances include all food that belongs to or comes from the other clan. Nowadays, since grain is bought and sold, the risk is much greater of breaking the food *tabu* unawares—for example, by drinking beer made of grain that comes from the forbidden clan, without suspecting it, in the house of a third party.

I recorded two cases of homicide in Moro the settlement of which was pending when I visited the tribe. The first case was that of a young man from Lebu who had killed another man in self-defence, during a brawl over a girl. He, his brothers, and many other relatives fled to Umm Dorein and sought the protection of the chief. After a few weeks, all the fugitives with the exception of the culprit and one of his brothers returned to their hill. After nine months the two brothers became impatient and requested that the chief should make the necessary arrangements for the *nmar* ritual and the payment of blood money so that they, too, could go home. The chief thought it was too early yet, but was hoping that in another month or so negotiations might be started with more promise of success.

The second case concerned a young man from Kororak who had had the bad luck to kill an opponent in a stick-fighting tournament. His whole family, including his mother and father-brothers, had fled to Umm Dorein. Not even an old man to perform the first *nmar* rite remained behind, which only increased the anger of the other kinship group. After two months already the fugitives became impatient. The rainy season was near, and they were afraid that they would be late with their sowing. Eventually one of the older men went back to Kororak for the performance of the first *nmar*, and soon afterwards the rest of the family dared return, save the culprit himself. Twice the chief intervened on his behalf with the family of the victim, suggesting blood money, both times in vain. On a second visit to Moro I learned that the settlement had eventually been effected six months after the death.

Oaths and ordeals in Tira are still largely the same; in Moro the traditional manner of swearing has fallen in disuse, having been replaced by the universal oath on the Arab *kitab* (book, charm). In Moro court cases dealing with magic, even with the witchcraft-like *kamradha*, are unknown. Indeed, it is difficult to see how this magic, firmly built into the clan system of the group and credited with an essentially defensive and moral nature, could be made the subject of litigation. In Tira, as we have seen, witchcraft accusations are taken to court. The same is true of certain new, alien forms of magic which are not bound up with the clan system and have only recently found their way into Tira. Let me describe in full a case of this kind which happened in 1940; it is of more than ordinary interest, comprising almost every species of

Tira magic—oaths and ordeals, traditional and alien magic, and, above all, that most sinister aspect of Tira clan beliefs, rain magic.

A certain Urende, of the Iltiri clan, had a daughter, Kaka, who was married to a man of the rain clan Nuli, Kolenge by name. Urende conceived a sudden dislike for his son-in-law, and one day suggested to his daughter that she should leave her husband and marry someone else. He supplied her with a magic root which he had bought from an Arab pedlar and told her to rub it on her body and mix it with the food which she prepared for her husband. This would cause her to remain childless, and her husband to dislike and eventually divorce her. This did in fact happen. Kaka was duly divorced, and married another man. But when she had left her husband's house, Kolenge discovered among the things which she had left behind suspicious-looking roots, which were obviously magic. As Urende was generally known to dabble in medicines and magic 'roots', Kolenge at once suspected his late father-in-law and accused him, first face to face, later before the court, of having supplied his daughter with magic in order to break up their marriage. He was even afraid that the magic might have been intended to cause him bodily harm. Urende denied the accusation. He went so far as to swear to his innocence on the axe of his former son-in-law, well knowing that by this oath on the rain clan he was exposing himself to the penalty of being killed by lightning. The case was dismissed, but Urende at once repented of what he had done. The same evening he went secretly to Kolenge, told him the truth and promised him a goat if he would cancel the oath (by sprinkling him with water), so removing the threat to his life. Kolenge declined to become an accomplice in perjury. Some time later drought broke out, and the people began to say that it was Urende's fault. For he had been seen brandishing his spear, to which he had tied some other magic root, against the sky, evidently to dispel the rain clouds. Moreover, he had boasted openly that with the help of this magic (again purchased from an Arab charm-seller) he would stop the rain; thus he could kill two birds with one stone: there would be no thunderstorm and lightning to punish his perjury, and at the same time the people would attribute the drought to his late son-in-law. It was safe to assume that this would be the natural conclusion, since everyone knew about the grievance of the Nuli man. The people might even kill him, and thus rid Urende of the witness to his perjury. However, by his boasts, Urende had betrayed himself. One day, the young men cornered Urende and threatened him till he swore on their knives that he had nothing to do with stopping the rain. But the older men ridiculed this meaningless oath on anybody's knife, and when the drought continued the resentment against Urende rose to such a pitch that it became clear the man would be killed if nothing was done. Now the chiefs stepped in. They declared that this was a case for the court, and threatened anyone who thought of taking the law into his own hands with heavy prison sentences. The sequel of this story is not uninteresting. The Federal Otoro-Tira Court sentenced Urende to eighteen months in prison for 'stopping the

rain'. The sentence was confirmed by the District Commissioner, but later quashed by the Legal Secretary on the grounds that an irrational act of this kind could not be recognized as constituting an actionable crime. Let me add that the full facts of the case were not revealed until I investigated it, some months after it had been tried. The official report spoke only of a 'rain-maker' who tried to 'stop the rain'. If the full facts had been known, a more 'rational' case could have been framed, based mainly on Urende's perjury and his avowed intent of inciting public anger against his son-in-law.

Chieftainship

Let me begin with the discussion of an aspect of traditional political organization which we have not yet touched—namely, the extension of the 'common peace' and 'common law' beyond the tribe, over areas covered by 'international' pacts or treaties. The wars and raids of the Tira carried them far afield, as far north as Delami, and in the south and south-west as far as Talodi and Moro. But only with one of the numerous groups with which they thus came into contact did they establish such intertribal pacts—with their nearest neighbours, the Otoro. We have described their rather ineffectual temporary peace treaties and the office of the 'Chief of the Path', who was in charge of the negotiations.

The wars and raids of the Moro were with the Tira, Mesakin, and Arabs. No intertribal pacts existed, implying the acceptance of a common peace and of penalties if the peace were broken. But as in Tira and Otoro we find a machinery for intertribal negotiations, again embodied in the office of an ambassador whose person was inviolable and who would be sent to the enemy to negotiate the ransom for captives made in raids and affrays. The Moro ambassador was known as *kapredho*, 'messenger'. On his official errands he carried a spear to which a piece of cotton cloth was tied, so as to make him known to the enemy. Each Moro hill had its own 'messengers'. At one time there were five ambassadors in Umm Dorein, each 'accredited' to a different enemy group: Mesakin Qusar, Mesakin Towal, Tira Lomon, Talodi-Arabs, and the Arab groups to the west of Moro. These ambassadors had to speak the language of the tribes with which it was their business to treat; thus they were often ex-slaves, captives from these other tribes, who had been adopted into a Moro family and clan. They had to be courageous men, too, who were not afraid of walking unprotected into the enemy camp. Their office was not hereditary and their appointment strictly *ad hominem*. Moreover, they were merely subordinate agents. When a Moro family one of whose members had been captured by the enemy desired to make use of the services of the *kapredho*, it addressed itself first to the 'big man' of the community and handed him the ransom; he would then send the tribal ambassador on his mission.

Here we meet again with the figure of the 'big man', who, owing his position of authority neither to spiritual powers nor to membership of a

specific clan, seems to represent the equivalent of a political chief in this chiefless society. He was known as *elan*, which title is also given to the modern, Government-appointed chief. Yet our description of Moro as a 'chiefless' society is essentially true. It regulated itself through the mutual adjustment of its segments, clans, and kinship groups, and its unity was vested in their coalescence and interdependence. The *elan* took little or no part in guiding the former and never provided a rallying point for the latter. We have heard that families could appeal to the 'chief' to help them recover stolen property by force; I was also told that in long-drawn blood feuds the *elan* might be asked to intervene and to persuade a kinship group reluctant to accept blood money. But one would turn to him only as one would to any powerful or influential fellow tribesman. Both the appeal and the intervention were voluntary, and the latter contained none of the elements of an authoritative order or sanction. The *elan* was, above all, a war leader. He would plan raids and advise his men where to strike and what tactics to pursue. He might tell them (to quote an informant): 'Don't go to village So-and-so. Choose a small place, with few people to defend it, and fall upon them. If you are met by larger crowds, scatter.' He would collect the young men—the warriors of the community—and lead them in the raid. His power rested mainly on his wealth and on the large following which he could command as member of a numerically powerful kinship group. But personal qualities, strength and courage, might outweigh these other qualifications. A certain Gardud was accepted as *elan* by the people of Umm Dorein solely because of his strength and imperious personality. Neither his wealth nor the size of his kinship group were out of the ordinary; nor apparently was his intelligence outstanding (he was 'not strong in giving advice'). But he was 'strong with the stick'; he killed two men because he coveted their wives, which feat secured him the leadership of his group. After his death the local leadership which he had established lapsed, and the people attached themselves to the *elan* of a neighbouring locality.

We note the transitory nature of this pseudo-chieftainship, both with regard to succession and to the territorial claims which it entailed. According to my informants, the position of the *elan* was not (or not necessarily) hereditary. As the people only remember one generation of these 'chiefs', this statement cannot be checked, though their short memory in this respect is in itself significant. The single hill community would number several *elan*, each residing in a different locality. But their number and the division of their spheres of power seems to have followed no rule; they were determined only by the accident when or where a 'big man' happened to arise. In the last generation there were five *elan* in Umm Dorein, two in the southern part of the hill (belonging to the same clan), two in the central range, and one in a village on the northern flank.

This system of pseudo-chieftainship, ill-defined and impermanent though it was, served as the model for the present political organization.

We find again five chiefs, the chief of the hill (*Mek*) and four local heads now known as *Sheikhs*, residing in the localities which had supplied the last generation of *elan*. Two of these five chiefs (the *Mek* and one *Sheikh*) as well as one sub-chief (*Wakil*) are the sons of the men who ruled as *elan*. The grandson of a fourth *elan*, whose family emigrated to Kororak, holds a local chieftainship in that hill. Yet there has been one significant change: the present chief and sub-chiefs, both the descendants of the old *elan* and the new men, come from large, important clans. They belong, moreover, to different clans, so that each represents both a locality and a clan. The *Mek's* clan is a significant exception, being represented by three men—the *Mek* and two *Sheikhs*. The clan representation is not complete: the smaller clans are left unrepresented and even three of the big Umm Dorein clans (Amruth, Ludhar, and Nagera) are missing in the list of modern chiefs. But Umm Dorein is a small group, for which an administrative body of four or five men seems sufficient. The scheme of 'representation' could thus only be in the nature of a compromise. It cannot be said that this twofold representation is being evolved consciously. The modern chiefs are middle-aged men, not yet of the age which would qualify them for the position of clan heads in the traditional sense. In explaining on what ground this or that man had been selected for the position of a *Sheikh* or *Wakil*, informants would mention that he is popular, that he has influence and is listened to by the people, and sometimes, that the locality from which he comes needed a local head.[1] But to have influence and to be 'listened to' seems bound up with membership of large clans. And it lies in the nature of the Moro clan structure that one tends to think of representatives of different (and distant) localities as representing different clans as well. We find evidence of this in the creation of sub-chiefs in addition to the *Sheikhs* residing in the traditional *elan* localities; of the six sub-chiefs of Umm Dorein, five are merely assistants of the *Sheikhs*, and belong to their localities and clans; but the sixth comes from a new locality (in the eastern part of the hill) as well as a new, large clan (Gilu), not formerly represented among the *elan*.

The other Moro hills have a closely similar organization, the internal structure of which, however, I have not studied. In Kororak the political organization reflects the evolution of this community from immigrant groups: the present *Mek* is the son of the man who founded the first settlement and later became the unquestioned *elan* of the new community. In Kororak, incidentally, I met an old, very famous medicine-man (*udhumi*), who considered that the Government ought to have made him chief and who was consequently on bad terms with the representatives of the present régime. If he avoided all contact with the *Mek* and *Sheikhs* because he was angry and jealous, they avoided him equally from fear.

[1] The last reason was mentioned by the *Mek* when he told me that he intended to promote the *Wakil* of Namelle to *Sheikh*. This *Wakil* is the son of the *elan* who resided in the same locality; he belongs to the chief's clan.

The people at large firmly rejected the thought of such a combination of secular and spiritual powers. This question, however, is of little consequence, for men-*udhumi* are extremely rare in Moro.

The Government has united the Moro hills in a federation which provides for a common tribal court and close co-operation in administrative measures. From the point of view of taxation, each hill remains a separate unit. The *Mek* of Umm Dorein, the most capable of all Moro chiefs, has been appointed as the president of the tribal court and as head of the Moro federation.

The Moro *elan* appears in Tira as *ele* or *elegra gra* meaning 'big'. The addition of this impressive suffix does not seem to have much foundation in concrete fact. The powers of the Tira 'chief' appear to have been more limited and transitory than those of the Moro *elan*. The Tira 'big man' certainly never had any part in the control of public life. But the disturbed history of Tira makes any examination of the political past futile. It proves impossible to obtain any but contradictory information on such points as the number of 'chiefs' at the time when the tribe lived on top of Tira el Akhdar, the parts of the hill over which they established their rule, or the extent to which their position was hereditary.

This impression of a weak and unstable system of pseudo-chieftainship is confirmed by the later developments under British rule. When the Tira were forced down into the plain, two descendants of original *ele* families (dynasties?) were appointed as *Sheikhs* of the new settlements by the Government, a certain Mala in Dordo and one Girban in Kora. The former, however, killed his wife and went to prison, and the latter was deposed for some other irregularity. Various other *Sheikhs* who were appointed in the course of time changed equally quickly, being deposed either because they were unequal to controlling their groups or because they proved dishonest. Tira proved a difficult tribe to pacify, and for a considerable time it had to be administered by police measures rather than by the appointed tribal authorities. In 1930, when the restrictions on the settlement of the Tira were finally removed, the first tribal chief, or *Mek*, was appointed. The first *Mek*, Kodilla, was a man of great influence, wealthy and domineering (he was the man who married his own daughter-in-law, showing his contempt for the tribal code). He lasted only six years, and had to be deposed for maladministration. The appointment of his successor, the present *Mek*, represented a change of policy: he is an ex-police corporal from Kalkadda, and his police experience constituted his main qualification. He, too, had to steer through troubled waters for some time; till recently, a police post had to be kept permanently in the Tira hills to lend force to the orders of the Native Administration.

It seems natural to attribute the political difficulties in Tira to the weak foundations of chieftainship in this tribe no less than to the unfortunate personalities of the various chiefs. The comparison with Otoro, with its powerful traditional chieftainship, or Moro, where the transition

from the old to the new system was remarkably smooth and efficient, seems to confirm this view. But chief and chieftainship represent only one aspect of the problem. The roots of Tira 'lawlessness' go deeper, into the very stratum of the social structure. We discover two main factors: the disregard for clan organization in the modern political system, and the strength of tribal solidarity. Both factors are borne out by the comparison with Moro.

(1) The Native Administration of Tira is organized on the following lines. Each hill community is under a *Sheikh* who is assisted by a *Wakil* belonging to the same locality and clan. In addition to the six hill chiefs (disregarding Tira Mande), there is the paramount chief of the tribe, the *Mek*, who resides in Kalkadda. It will be seen from the following list that clan representation can play no part in this system, which recognizes locality alone. Four of the seven chiefs belong to the same clan, and altogether only four of the seventeen Tira clans are represented. The corresponding proportion in Umm Dorein was five clans out of seventeen; but we must remember that Tira is about six times as large as that Moro hill, which clearly demonstrates the inadequacy of this representation.

List of Tira Chiefs

Name	*Locality*	*Clan*
Mek Rahma	—	Iltaro
Sheikh Amodha . . .	Loro	Iltaro
Sheikh Almeki . . .	Kattei	Iltaro
Sheikh Ismayn . . .	Dordo	Iltaro
Sheikh Ali	Kora	Lgopa
Sheikh Nyalo	Kalkadda	Iltobo
Sheikh Urende . . .	Jokhob	Itumbel

We must for a moment discuss the meaning of 'clan representation' in the political field. The example of Moro has shown that it cannot be of the same order as the traditional representation by old men and clan heads, which referred exclusively to spiritual powers and the trusteeship of clan magic. In Tira as in Moro the chiefs are largely younger men, who could never aspire to this position. Only one Tira *Sheikh* is a *romoco*, though two others were thinking of undergoing cicatrization soon. The people are convinced that the new, practical tasks for their chiefs and sub-chiefs demand qualifications of a new type (of which agility and comparative youth is one). Interpreted in this new sense, a fair representation of the clans on the administrative body seems of utmost importance. In a society of so far-reaching segmentation, in which the question of law, especially, is inseparable from clan concepts, the men who control public life must have their roots in these segments—as long as the segments retain their meaning. These men must be in a position to appreciate and voice the interests of the various clans, whose members appear before

them as plaintiffs or defendants. The traditional conception of social control as vested in the mutual adjustment of the segments must be retained in the new tribal administration, transformed into an adjustment through individuals officially representing clans and clan interests. Let me stress that this is not mere 'theory'. My conclusions are borne out by a significant unofficial organization which the Tira evolved or, more precisely, retained, as it were beneath the official local representation. The actual (not the officially recognized) method of tax-collection in Tira is by clans.[1] 'The *Sheikhs* have appointed a number of men, each representing a different clan, as tax-collectors in their various groups. It is reasonable to assume that, if the recognition of clan organization proved helpful in tax-collection, it must prove even more helpful in matters of law and public security.

(2) We have spoken of the intensive integration of the Tira tribe. A group so conscious of its unity must be slower than more loosely knit societies to give up its usages, specially those which tend to endorse this very group identity. We might call it unfortunate that these same usages and customs prove inadmissible from the viewpoint of public security—such as the licence to attack and raid other groups, or the radical means by which the society controls its rain clan. It seems significant that, compared with Moro, the Tira have to resort to much more vigorous measures to maintain public order (or adapt it to modern requirements): we remember the special curse which had to be laid on thieving, or the rigid interpretation of accidental killing in the course of stick-fights. It is significant, too, that these measures do not refer to irregular acts of individual violence—indeed these are more frequent in Moro—but rather to the moral attitude of the group as such.

Conclusion

In comparing the two tribes the predominant impression is that of two cultures complementing each other like variations of the same theme. The clan system of symbiotic type represents the theme. Much as musical variations pick out and develop different features and motifs embodied in the theme, so the two societies elaborate different aspects of the range of realizations which the cultural theme allows. A 'motif' ignored or only just touched upon in one society is fully developed in the other. Thus the two cultures select different phases of individual life, which they ritualize and work into emblems of clan identity: Tira culture seizes, above all, on death and burial rites; Moro, on birth. First menstruation, ritualized and surrounded with avoidances only in one Tira clan, becomes in Moro a paramount occasion for clan rituals and the affirmation of clan identity. The totemic pattern of the Tira

[1] Official tax-collection was originally by clans. This method led to great delays, and was therefore replaced by collection through the local chiefs. But it is, as we can see, still the same method, though it goes by a different name. Perhaps in its original form, it did not correspond too well to the clan division. Perhaps too it proved inefficient because at the time taxation as such was still new and would have met with the same obstacles, whichever the method of collection.

clans in turn appears reduced in Moro to vague pseudo-totemic associations in one or two clans only. The magic faculties of some Tira clans to inflict harm upon enemies or evil-doers are transformed in Moro into the universal, 'automatic' clan magic. Both tribes regard special clans as the potential causes of certain disasters of nature. In Moro this conception is expressed indifferently; in Tira it is followed up to its logical conclusion, the clans being ostracized, branded as dangerous (as the storm-*cum*-lunacy clan Ltrngum), or declared without the law (as the rain clan Nuli). In Moro, finally, we find two expressions of clan symbolism and magic which have no counterpart in Tira—couvade, utilized as behaviour pattern typical of certain clans, and concrete magic paraphernalia.

The menstruation avoidances in Moro fit into the larger picture of that tribe's magic beliefs, which include a deep superstitious fear of uncleanness. We have correlated the occurrence of couvade with kinship structure: couvade expresses the emphasis on paternal importance in a patrilineal kinship group in which matrilineal elements almost hold the balance. We note that the Tira clan ostracism and 'scapegoat' motif occur (as I believe, significantly) in the more closely knit group, in which all segments are enclosed in a single unit of communal life. We can discover no further causal links between the 'variations' which the two cultures have made their own and the cultures at large. Nor is the pattern of traits emerging in each culture possessed of inner logic. The combination of traits which makes up the Tira pattern—death ritual, totemic concepts, clan ostracism—appears as disconnected and heterogeneous as the Moro combination of birth ritual, couvade, menstruation avoidance, 'automatic' magic. We must admit an ultimate arbitrariness in the two elaborations of the 'common theme'.

The common theme of symbiotic clan organization does not pervade the whole culture. There is room for other, independent divergences, even in the basic structural features. They repeat, in essence, the divergences we encountered when comparing the cultures of Otoro and Heiban. Like Otoro, Tira recognizes the complete clan adoption of wives and aims at social equality of the sexes; it canalizes individual development and fashions individual aims of life in its rigid age-grades. While Moro, akin to Heiban, is committed to the incomplete clan adoption and to sex inequality, and allows a freer and more unguided adolescence.

We can draw this double parallel further. Moro culture, compared with Tira, is also one in which individual violence appears more unrestrained; obsession with magic fears greater; and the emotional balance under stress more precarious. The first trait is visible in the passionate stick-fighting duels, which often end fatally; the deep urge of revenge in Moro; the occurrence of fratricide as a result of quarrels over inheritance. As regards the second trait—the obsession with magic fear—I must be more explicit. In both tribes magic fear is, in a sense, a dominant feature. But in Tira it is of a more abstract and remote kind,

in the nature of a thought rather than of emotion. Its concern is, above all, with cosmic events: with the temporary (and largely accidental) disturbances of a well-ordered universe. In Moro this fear is of persons and things, and of magic agencies which may be unleashed at any moment. One fears the anger or jealousy of the dead, the curse of 'houses', the devilries of *kamradha* magic. The fear is often tinged with the emotion of horror—as in the fear of uncleanness, leprosy, menstruation. We can justly speak of an 'obsession'.

Thirdly, the measure of emotional stability—suicide. When I inquired into suicide in Tira, I was told in three hills that it was non-existent. After long and slow inquiries in a fourth hill, Kora, I could record two cases which the people remembered; both were suicides of widows who had by this means escaped from a hated levirate marriage. The Moro at once admitted the existence, and frequent occurrence, of suicide, both of men and women. In the one hill community of Umm Dorein six cases had happened in the last five years. Two were cases of girls who killed themselves because they had been betrothed to old men. One girl hanged herself because her father refused to let her marry the man she loved. Another girl, of whose attempted suicide we have spoken before, tried to kill herself and her baby when her father forbade her marriage to the father of her illegitimate child. Two men killed themselves in distress over a grave illness of their young sons.

Suicide in these two groups, then, is not, as in Heiban and Otoro, an equivocal element, which may appear both in the 'harmonious' and the 'discordant' society. Here suicide is positively aligned with the more violent and fear-ridden culture. Our facts suggest this explanation. Tira culture, like Otoro, the more purposeful and more evenly balanced, is yet less exacting in the conformity which it imposes on the individual: 'misfits' need not pay the penalty of emotional collapse and self-sacrifice. We find evidence in the Tira age-grades, which make allowance for failures (while in Otoro their existence is disregarded); in the levirate marriage, less rigid in Tira than in Otoro; in the expedient of adoption, meant to make marriage at high bride-price accessible to paupers; and in Tira's less stringent urge of ambition and success.

In the two pairs of tribes, Otoro-Heiban and Tira-Moro, similar divergences of social structure thus appear accompanied by similar cultural and psychological differences. The contrast between Tira and Moro is somewhat less sharp than in Otoro-Heiban. Nor does it pervade an equally wide range of traits. Two dominant features in the contrasting behaviour pattern of Heiban and Otoro—the attitude to sex and the degree of ritualization—appear as it were as 'neutral' traits in Moro and Tira. Yet the correlation which remains, twice confirmed, is convincing. To recall it once more, it groups together partnership in marriage, the organization of adolescence, a purposive outlook, restraint on violence and magic fear, and (a new feature) greater emotional stability.

CHAPTER VIII

KORONGO AND MESAKIN

People and Country

CROSSING the flat cotton-soil country to the south of Moro, one strikes a low hill range, stretching from south-east to north-west, the first of three roughly parallel ranges which are separated by stretches of flat country, and grow lower and more broken as one moves south. They are the last hills before the wide expanse of the plain sweeps down into the valley of the Nile. The northernmost chain is broken in two by a narrow valley. The two halves are occupied by tribes claiming independent origin and speaking a different language. The two groups together have a population of about 6,000. The Arabs call the eastern group Mesakin Qusar (or Daqiq) and the western group Mesakin Towal. The two names (meaning 'short' and 'long' Mesakin) are said to refer to the difference in the physical stature of the two groups, which is, in fact, quite noticeable. We shall be concerned in the following only with the eastern group. The two southern chains are inhabited by a group of common language and culture, numbering about 14,000 souls and known to the Arabs as Korongo.[1] The origin of this name is obscure. It is possibly derived from the name of a high (uninhabited) hill in the northern chain, Dogorongo.

Neither Korongo nor Mesakin have a collective tribal name for themselves save the vague, ubiquitous term 'hill people' (*kadomedi* in Korongo; *uriyo rowa* in Mesakin), which they would also use when speaking of the Nuba tribes in general as against Arabs or Dinka. Moreover, this collective name does not stand for a vivid concept, for it is most difficult to elicit, and when you start your questioning the people will at first completely fail to understand what you mean. Yet though they have no collective names for themselves, the two tribes call other alien groups, and partly even each other, by collective tribal names. Both Korongo and Mesakin call the Moro (who, as we remember, are similarly without a collective tribal name) Mra, and the Mesakin call the Korongo, collectively, Kadindi. When speaking of themselves, the people must use the names of the various local groups and hill communities of which the tribe is composed.

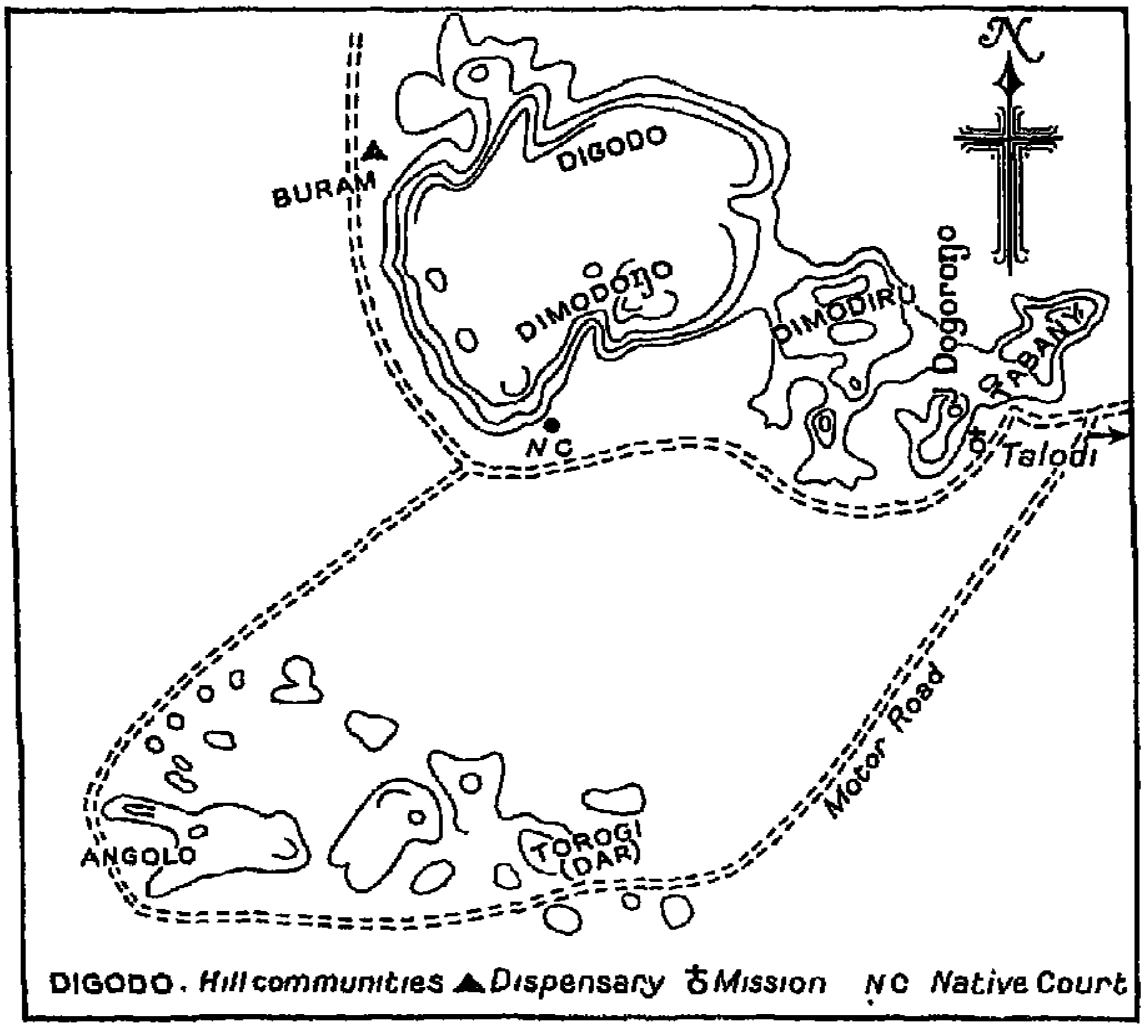
The absence of a collective ethnic concept does not preclude the recognition of the unity of the language and culture. But this linguistic and cultural unit is extended beyond the group or groups sharing a common habitat. Thus the Korongo claim close cultural and linguistic affinity with a number of groups outside the Korongo hills—with Tumtum on Jebel Talodi, Dere on Jebel Illiri, and three small hill groups in the

[1] The north-western edge of the northern chain is an exception, being inhabited by a group of Mesakin Qusar.

west: Tesh (known in the vernacular as Turumu), Fama (Kolmedin), and Shatt Safiya (Digas). This claim does not entirely correspond to fact. I have checked its truth in Talodi, Tesh, and Fama. But the people of Shatt, as I discovered, have a different language and culture and are altogether of different ethnic stock.[1]

The Korongo attribute this community of culture to the common

KORONGO HILLS



origin of the to-day widely scattered groups. According to Korongo tradition, Jebel Tabuli, a large, now uninhabited, hill massif east of Korongo, was the ancient home of these different groups.

At that time, the tradition goes on, the hill was densely populated and the people grew more and more numerous, for there was no illness and death. In high spirits, the people began to perform sham funerals, carrying a tree trunk in the funeral procession and burying it with full ceremonial. But God grew angry when he saw this mockery, and sent illness and death as punishment. So many of the people died that the rest became afraid, fled from the hill and scattered to many places.

The wide unit of culture and origin proclaimed by this tradition, combined with the narrow group concept, leaves the Korongo tribe, i.e.

[1] They represent an offshoot of the Daju of Western Darfur.

the group living in the Korongo hills, as it were in mid-air. From both definitions the tribal community emerges as an essentially accidental configuration, devoid of intrinsic unity or identity. We shall see that this vague, fluid conception is indeed characteristic of the whole social existence of the people. Take intermarriage—always a gauge of group solidarity. The groups occupying the Korongo hills affirm their interrelation by regular intermarriage. But intermarriage also follows that wider, cultural unit defined by tradition, and links Korongo with Tesh, Fama, Tumtum, and even with their spurious kinsmen in Shatt. Nor does intermarriage stop here; for the Korongo, more catholic in this respect than any other Nuba tribe, subscribe to almost indiscriminate intermarriage. They intermarry with the Mesakin Qusar, with the Dinka of Lake Abyad, and with the Talodi Arabs.

The Mesakin Qusar similarly claim cultural and linguistic affinity with other groups—with their next-door neighbours, the Mesakin Towal, and the three small groups with which the latter share language and culture: the people of Jebel Alheimr and Taloka in the west, and of Tata on Talodi Hill. So far as I could judge from a fleeting visit to some of these groups, this indigenous ethnographical theory is, at least, exaggerated. How far the languages of Mesakin Qusar and Towal are structurally akin I cannot say; without doubt they are mutually unintelligible, though it is true that some Mesakin Qusar are bilingual and speak the language of the other group. This exaggerated claim to cultural affinity, in which the Mesakin Qusar firmly believe, is difficult to explain. Possibly it is an expression of the desire of this small group to appear larger than it really is.[1] One of the effects of this assumption of a wider cultural relationship must be to blur somewhat the consciousness of tribal identity. But this effect is much less pronounced than in Korongo. The belief of the Mesakin in these cultural links is not backed by traditions of common origin; the people maintain that they have 'always' lived in their present habitat. Nor does it supply a motive for intermarriage. The Mesakin largely marry among themselves (or did so in the past), and intermarry only with the Korongo.

The relationship of Korongo and Mesakin is equally surrounded by traditions of cultural and ethnic affinity. The Korongo maintain that the Mesakin were among the groups whose original home was Jebel Tabuli (a tradition unknown among the Mesakin). Both tribes agree that they have certain clans in common. It needs some linguistic twisting, though, to make this correspondence obvious: thus the Kalago or Kalagwa clan of Korongo is identified with the Mesakin clan Kalwa, and two clans known as Karoway and Kama in Korongo, with clans called Karra and Kadone in Mesakin. Whatever the real facts, these traditions endorse

[1] The attitude of the tribe towards its clans would bear out such an evaluation of the size of groups. People who belong to large clans mention them with extreme pride, while small clans are spoken of in a perfunctory fashion. A significant feature, most unusual in the Nuba tribes, is the fusion of two of the Mesakin clans into a single, larger unit.

both an undoubted cultural correspondence and intimate intertribal relations, visible in the close co-operation in many fields, in intermarriage, constant intercourse, and in the fact that many people in both groups are bilingual.

Settlement and Homestead

The sub-division of the two tribes in local communities shows some of the vagueness and fluidity typical of the tribal concept. It is only partly reducible to geographical conditions, to the varied configuration of this low, broken hill country, which must preclude a sharp division into hill communities of the kind we encountered in the other tribes. The smallest local units are, again, the individual hamlets or 'villages', known by separate names, and conforming to the straggling settlements familiar to us from other Nuba groups. The next larger local group—the largest collective group recognized in Korongo and Mesakin—comprises a number of such settlements occupying the same hill range or part of a hill range. These hill communities, in our terminology, vary widely both in size and geographical distinctness.

The people living on the southern Korongo chain are divided in two hill communities which are clearly marked off, physically, by a stretch of uninhabited country: Torogi (or Dar) in the east, and Angolo in the west. In the northern chain, which is more densely populated and geographically more compact, the division into different hill communities is less obvious. Geographically, in fact, one might consider the whole range a single hill community. By the pattern of agricultural co-operation and land tenure, we should distinguish three local sections, an eastern and western group, whose lands lie on the south side of the hill chain, and a third group which farms to the north of the range. The people, however, speak of five distinct groups. Two are hill communities proper, each comprising five to six settlements; they are Tabany on the south-eastern spur of the range, and Dimodongo in the west. The farm land of these two groups lies side by side to the south of the hill. The remaining three groups are small, only villages or twin villages, in fact. They are called Tabsul, Dimodiru, and Digodo, and are situated on low ridges and narrow stretches of plateau on the north flank of the hill. Dimodiru and Digodo farm on the north side, the people of Tabsul both to the north and south of the range.

Size and composition of the local groups have undergone certain changes in the course of time, though the population was never, apparently, more evenly divided. Tabany, originally a small group, grew into a large community; Dimodiru, on the other hand, was reduced from a large group to a small twin village. We may add that other forms of social activity, especially religious co-operation, only underline this uneven, haphazard alignment. The two large communities, Dimodongo and Tabany, have each two grain priests, who collaborate in the fertility rites. Two of the small communities were, at the time of my visit, without grain priests, and had

to perform their rites with neighbouring groups, though one of the two communities was just about to install a new man. One priest, moreover, is known to have left his own community, Dimodiru, in the past and to have moved to Tabany when the latter grew so populous that it warranted first one, and then even two grain priests.

The Mesakin Qusar distinguish three main hill communities, which are clearly marked off, geographically: Rozari or Tozari in the east, Rolabe in the west (called Reika in the Arab version and on maps), and Dobo (Buram) in the south-west. The last community, which is situated on the north-west edge of the northern Korongo chain, belongs to-day politically to the latter group. In addition, there are four smaller hill communities which lie on scattered hillocks in the eastern part of the Mesakin range and are vaguely described as 'belonging' to Tozari. Political changes have somewhat obscured the geographical basis of this sub-division and its nomenclature. Originally, the hill community derived its collective name from the main hill range on or around which it lived. When in 1923, after police action against the Mesakin, the tribe was moved down and made to settle in the valley and on the low foothills, the hill range ceased to be the visible centre, and its name the precise description, of the community. The name was adopted by one of the new settlements, which is neither the largest nor the most important.[1]

Neither Korongo nor Mesakin have emigrated (in historical times) to other parts. The Korongo received a group of immigrants from Talodi into their hills, Arabs, ex-slaves mostly, who had previously intermarried with the Korongo and settled in Tabany after the suppression of the Talodi rebellion.

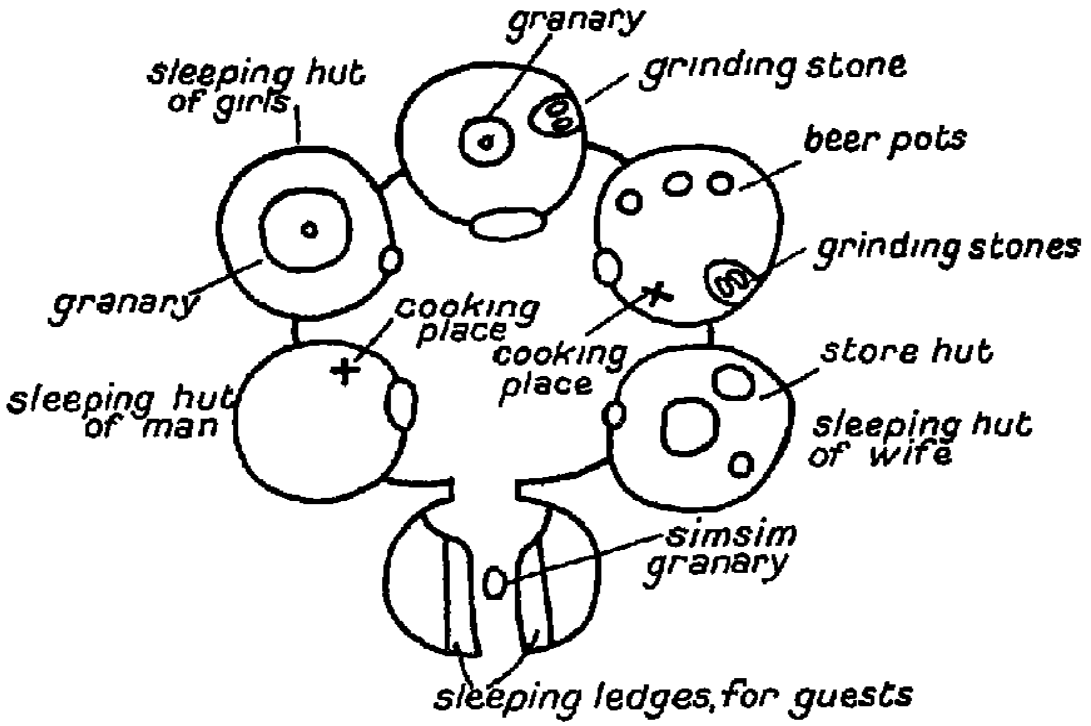
The Korongo and Mesakin house is of the 'ring type' which we described among the Moro. It is without the buttress of heavy masonry, for the Korongo and Mesakin like to build their houses, not on steep slopes, but on a comfortably flat piece of ground. The round huts, tall and turret-like, are erected upon a foundation of crude stones and mud. The walls are built wholly of mud; thick at the base and thinning towards the top, with a perpendicular inside wall, their outline sweeps gracefully up and inward. The Mesakin huts are topped by a conical roof; the Korongo huts by a bell-shaped roof. Both groups are excellent builders, the Korongo possibly a cut above the Mesakin. The Korongo house (called *kyer*) is larger, more decorative with its bell-shaped roof, and more convenient in its arrangements. At least, the Mesakin must find it so, for it has recently become the fashion in Mesakin to have houses in Korongo style and import Korongo builders for that purpose.

The Korongo house is also more akin to the Moro house. Like the latter, it consists of six huts, with connecting walls in between, one of the huts serving as gateway. The entrance-hut is divided in two by

[1] Thus the name Tozari refers to-day to Tozari hill, now uninhabited; to a small settlement at the foot, not far from, but not identical with, the chief's 'village'; and to the hill community at large.

a passage-way with a wall on either side and a narrow ledge in front: behind the wall sleep boys and goats, on the ledge in the passage-way, guests. Each of the other huts has a round, pillar-like granary in the centre. The first hut to the left, as you enter the house, is the sleeping-hut of the family head; the next the sleeping-hut of the girls; the next two huts contain grinding stone, fireplace, cooking utensils; the last hut is mainly a store-room, but also serves as sleeping-hut for the wife when, for one or the other reason (menstruation, confinement), she sleeps alone. The outside gate is in the shape of a keyhole. The rest of the huts open on the central 'courtyard', the cooking-huts with fairly large, oval or semi-circular windows, the sleeping-huts with tiny window holes, 4 ft. above the ground, into which you dive head forward, wriggling through like

KORONGO HOUSE



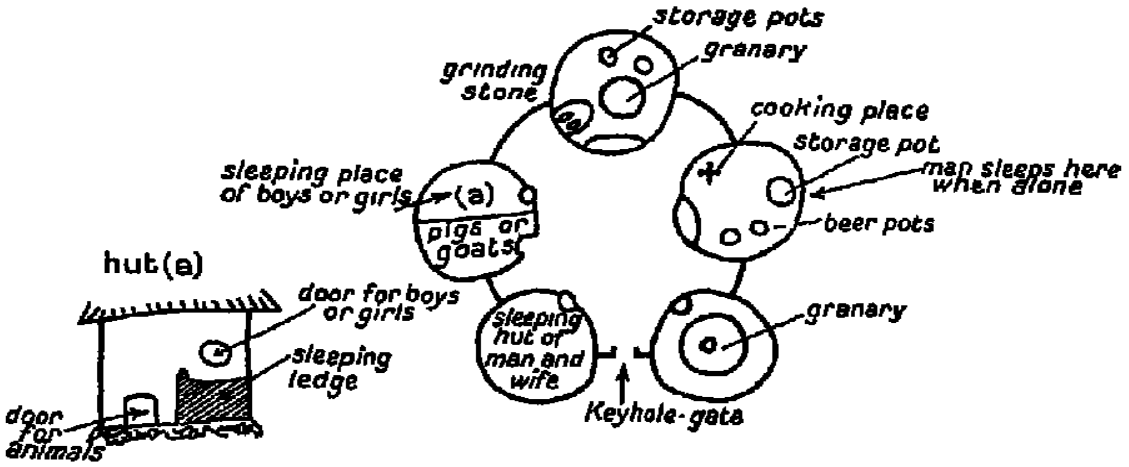
a fish. However, they keep you warm in the cold season and dry in the rains.

The Mesakin house has five huts, the gate, again keyhole-shaped, being let into one of the connecting walls. One hut is the sleeping-hut of husband and wife; another contains grinding stones and cooking-place; a third, beer and storage pots—there also the husband sleeps when he is alone; the fourth hut takes the large granary; the fifth hut is a combined pigsty and bedroom for the girls, who sleep on a raised mud ledge filling one half of the hut.

The houses may be both larger and smaller than this standard house which we described. The ring of huts may be enlarged by two or three; or a man who has several wives would also have several houses, all close together, but might build the houses for his junior wives on a smaller scale, with three or four huts only.

Those who are fond of studying the distribution of cultures by listing shape and construction of material objects would be grossly misled by the identical house type in Moro and Korongo-Mesakin. The closely similar domicile houses fundamentally different social groups. In the Korongo and Mesakin house the following are living: a man, his wife (or wives), and either their (unmarried) children or the children of the man's sister. In these two matrilineal societies it is the custom for family heads to adopt their sister-children (both boys and girls), while their own children are in turn taken into the house and family of their mother-brother. The children are exchanged when they are six to seven years of age. The rules are fluid: there is nothing to forbid parents to keep their own children, which they do, in fact, in many cases. A random

MESAKIN HOUSE



census in the two tribes showed that eighteen out of the thirty Korongo children whose case I examined, and sixteen out of thirty children in Mesakin, were living in their mother-brother's house, against twelve and fourteen who were living with their parents.[1] Nor is there any rule as to how many or how few children a certain mother-brother might adopt. Various factors play a part. Some fathers simply dislike letting their own children go;[2] on the other hand, a man who has no children himself, especially if he is well-to-do, will insist on adopting his sister's children; children whose father died will nearly always be adopted by their mother-brother; the children themselves, finally, often choose to leave their parents, preferring, for example, to join the household of a nice uncle to staying with an ill-tempered mother. But mother-brothers, we may add, are always harsher taskmasters than fathers. Often a mother would reproach her husband for his leniency with the children, saying: 'No good can come of this; much better send the children to my brother.'

The children who are adopted by a mother-brother become his 'sociological' sons and daughters, and full members of his household

[1] The chief of the Mesakin adopted, in addition to several sister-children, also a son of his brother; this innovation clearly reflects the desire of this wealthy chief to raise an impressive, exceptionally large family.

[2] A Korongo father of four children whom I met refused to part with even one.

and family. Girls help in domestic duties and are later married from this house. The boys look after their mother-brother's herds; they will appeal to him for their bride-price and will expect to be made his heirs. At the same time the relations of adopted children with their biological father and family continue: the children will from time to time visit their father's house and spend a day and night there (though never longer). At certain important phases in adolescence girls and young men must enlist the help—economic and ritual—of their fathers as well as mother-brothers. The same is true of marriage and bride-price. And even though a man may have been brought up in the mother-brother's family, he would yet be entitled to inherit from his father.

Now it is clear that this fluid rule of paternity precludes a strict or permanent distribution of kinship groups and (matrilineal) clans. When young men marry, they build themselves new houses close to the home in which they were brought up. If they had lived with their mother-brother, this would foster the spreading of the clan in the same locality; if they lived with their father, houses representing different clans would spring up side by side. Successive generations may do different things: the relationship of man and place admits of no continuity. This irregular design must deeply affect the life of the family and individuals. Brothers may grow up together, or may live in different localities. Indeed, to the individual the place and community in which he finds himself in adulthood is little more than an accident, the outcome of a fifty-fifty chance. We must add that in this system of adoption the mother-brother is sometimes replaced by the maternal grandfather or the mother's mother-brother. A third and fourth chance of adoption and domicile thus enter in the calculation. The haphazardness which we discovered in the composition of the tribe and its communities is typical already of the nucleus of the social system.

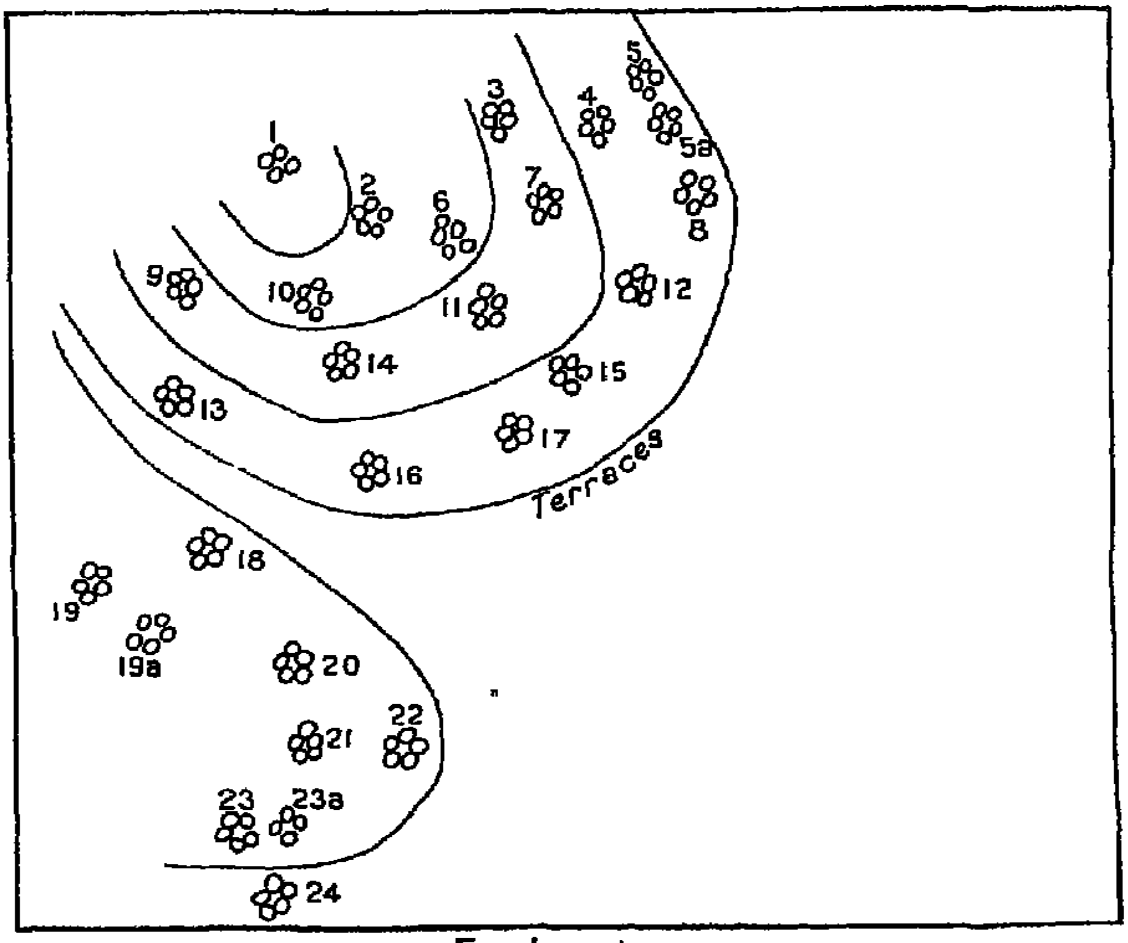
The uncertainty of domicile stops at the boundary of the tribe. The exchange of children is invariably excluded in intermarriage with alien groups. (The Korongo again choose the wider definition, and do not count Tesh and Fama as 'alien' groups.) The tribe, though fluid enough to admit intermarriage, disclaims the full consequences—or one of the consequences. It must accept the change of social identity entailed in intermarriage between matrilineal societies, i.e. the change in clan membership and kinship affiliation of the progeny; but it rejects the physical surrender or exchange of the offspring born in its confines and of its men. Ultimately, then, the ethnic group claims (and defends) an identity peculiar to itself and meaning more than merely a sum-total of social identities—namely, the identity which flows from biological continuity.

Clan

The Korongo clans (called *yare*), though not over-numerous, are not easy to elicit. They are not conceived of as a fixed series of segments which anyone should at once be able to enumerate. Nor are the people

well-informed as to the local distribution of clans. Thus I was told in Tabany that the clans in the north and south chain were 'completely different'. In reality, the majority of the clans is common to all three hill communities of the tribe (for the purpose of this description we will

SECTION OF MESAKIN SETTLEMENT IN TOZARI



Explanation

houses

5, 5a
19 19a } houses of men with two wives
23, 23a

Kalwa clan 1,3 4 5,8 16, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24
Karra clan 9 13, 14
Prsu clan 2,6 10, 11, 12, 15, 17
Pamellu clan: 22
Sorto clan 19
Manda clan: 7

19, 13 } mother-brother and sister-son
23.24
21, 22 - father and son

regard the north chain as a single, large hill community). I counted nineteen clans in the north chain and twenty-four in Dar, in the south chain; fourteen of these clans were identical. The hill community of Angolo is said to have the same clans as Dar. It is unnecessary to explain again that certain of the Korongo clans must also occur in the alien groups, like Tesh, Fama, Tumtum, with which the tribe intermarries,

as in turn alien clans from Mesakin or Dinka appear here and there in Korongo communities.[1] This is the list of clans which I recorded in Tabany-Dimodongo and Dar:

North chain	*South chain (Dar)*
Kalago	*id.*
Koffi	*id.*
Kama	*id.*
Mahssi	*id.*
Kogom	*id.*
Kagora	*id.*
Karara	*id.*
Kadagay	*id.*
Kagab	*id.*
Mony	*id.*
Kogush	*id.*
Korony	*id.*
Kagay	*id.*
Kassukwa	*id.*
Moli	*id.*
Karoway	—
Kajok	—
Komar	—
Kodo	—
—	Kajaga
—	Madogwar
—	Mandego
—	Kanawu
—	Kadobele
—	Mafif
—	Kakonyaro
—	Komorimosumo
—	Kagola

Dividing the total population of Korongo by the total number of different clans we arrive at an average clan of approximately 450 individuals. This statistical average does not, of course, correspond to the actual size of clans, which are both larger and smaller. Small clans appear to function as single units. In large clans exogamy and other clan-bound precepts affect, not the members of the theoretical clan, but those of a narrower section, which derives from greater familiarity. Vague though this definition may be, it is the only one that seems applicable. The section bears no name other than that of the clan at large; nor is it referred to by a specific term. The people would speak of 'close clan relations' as against the 'distant' relationship implied in the theoretical clan; locality plays no part in these criteria of 'closeness' and 'distance', and in either case clansmen are

[1] These alien clans are disregarded in the following lists of clans.

described by the same formula—'people of my clan' (*kudo mereadi*). The clan section is conceived of as a genealogical group slightly narrower and more concrete that the clan, the common ancestor being nearer to the present generation; but neither he nor the genealogies are remembered. The clan section thus stands somewhere between the (more concrete) lineage and the (more sharply circumscribed) sub-clan. The number of existing clan sections is not generally known; it takes even members of the clan considerable time to work them out. The sections are commonly described by the reference to some prominent member,—a grain-priest or tribal elder. And when marriages are planned between families of the same clan in distant localities (i.e. families not intimately acquainted), a careful study into pedigrees is often necessary to ascertain the confines of exogamy. This fluid sub-division of clans is attributed to the breaking-up of large clans, whose ancestry had grown so remote that groups within it came to regard each other as of different descent. Sometimes, too, a clan section is identified with an immigrant group of common clan origin; thus one of the three sections of the large Kalago clan is said to be of Mesakin origin. The nucleus of fact in these interpretations is evidently the gradual growth and possibly dispersal of clans to a point at which the clan-bound observances (exogamy, collective blood feud) could no longer be effectively maintained by the group at large.

The Mesakin call the clan *dello*. I recorded fifteen clans in Tozari, which appear to be common to all three hill communities of the tribe. The clans are of greatly varying size; none of the clans is sub-divided. Rather do we find the opposite development, for two of the clans (the first on the list given below) have merged into one. The two clans are still known by different names; but the names are often used indiscriminately for both groups, and the twin group acts in every respect as a unit. The two clans are said to have 'become one' already in past generations, though informants also state that at the time when the Mesakin clans were still exogamous (which they have not been for at least three generations) the two groups were allowed to intermarry—that is, must have formed separate clans. No explanation was forthcoming as to how and why the two segments merged save the little illuminating (though possibly significant) statement that now the twin group represents the largest clan in the tribe. These are the clans of Tozari, arranged roughly in order of size:

Kalwa
Manda
Kadone
Saya
Pamellu
Sambu
Pau
Karra or Karrangade
Kadindi

Kasena
Suru
Silo
Prsu
Silla
Sorto

The clan both in Korongo and Mesakin is matrilineal. It utilizes no impressive symbolisms or pervasive agencies of integration and differentiation. The clan name, borne by every member, is the only emblem of clan identity. The familiar eating avoidances between clans are missing. In Korongo a certain eating avoidance, demonstrating the unity of the clan, comes into force in the context of funeral feasts: on these occasions a large number of animals is slaughtered and the meat distributed among the guests; but only clans other than that of the deceased may partake of this meat. Another, curious, food avoidance (curious because quite unrelated to other tribal beliefs and practices) revives clan consciousness in Korongo when an individual is killed by a leopard: his, or her, clansmen living at the time must abstain from eating the flesh of leopard for the rest of their lives, at the penalty of leprosy. Both clan observances refer only to the 'near' clan relations, and not to the theoretical clan. Neither observance, nor any similar custom, occurs in Mesakin.

The clan, weakly integrated, seems also weakly effective. It acts as a determinant of behaviour mainly in two spheres of social activity: in marriage, that is, exogamy; and in the sphere of law, regarding homicide and revenge. As in the other Nuba tribes, the exogamous rules are also applied to illicit sexual relations which do not lead, or are not meant to lead, to marital union. The people conceive of no supernatural sanctions of these rules. In Korongo, as already mentioned, only the clan section is exogamous. In Mesakin clan exogamy has disappeared altogether, and the marriage restrictions which are still recognized rest entirely on the kinship definition of prohibited degrees.

The clan or (in Korongo) clan section is only indirectly involved in the collective duty of blood feud. The act of revenge and the threat of victimization concerns, not the clan as such, but the close relations—brothers, sister-sons. But the eating avoidances, the implied ostracism whose moral pressure is to secure revenge, are enjoined on the wider groups. The collective unity of the clan is expressed only in the special treatment of homicide within the clan, which differs from that meted out in the case of inter-clan homicide.[1]

Kindred

Let me recall the main characteristics of matrilineal kinship systems: fathers and children belong to different clans; the position of the father

[1] It is interesting to record that, when discussing homicide within the clan, informants especially emphasized the applicability of the rules also where the victim's clan membership was unknown to the assailant.

in the sense of family head falls to the mother-brother—that is, the nearest male relation of the father generation belonging to the same clan as the children. The nominal headship is strengthened, through the practice of adoption, to full domestic and moral control. But we have seen that, in the domain of concrete behaviour, this sociological alignment does not completely overrule the direct biological affiliation through the father. The two are effective side by side, they overlap, and, in the primary configuration of domestic grouping, achieve an almost mathematically exact balance.

In the patrilineal societies which we studied we found that the kinship terminologies allowed for certain matrilineal traits. Rather surprisingly, the kinship terminologies which we shall presently examine, present a closely similar picture: they are not turned round completely in accordance with the reversed affiliation; their main categories are again orientated on paternal descent (though slightly more so in Korongo than in Mesakin), and the employment of a descriptive term or two in place of classificatory categories represents the only readjustment. But the recognition of the opposite affiliation is of different moment in patrilineal and matrilineal societies. In the former it means essentially the inclusion of additional or subsidiary relationships; in these matrilineal societies patrilineal relationship have on their side the weight of biological affiliation, and of a competing, rival, alignment. If, in blurring the sociological, matrilineal, affiliation, the kinship terminology thus becomes involved in inconsistencies within itself, it evades another inconsistency, with reality—the reality of social behaviour and kinship sentiments. I cannot pursue this point further. Nor need we concern ourselves with certain minor descrepancies between the kinship terminologies of the two tribes—the employment of classificatory terms in one terminology for kinship degrees which, in the other, are defined by specific or descriptive terms (e.g. mother-brother and sister-son, father-sister's children, and mother-brother's children). We may only note that the proportion of these varying terms is roughly equal in both systems.

Kinship Terminology

	Korongo	*Mesakin*
Grandfather (pat. and mat.)	*dadu*	*abageba*
Grandmother (pat. and mat.)	*dadu*	*abageba*
Grandchildren	*dadu*	*abageba*
Father	*ēm*	*bapa* or *agediba*
Mother	*nīm* or *nof*	*abene*
Father-brother	like father	like father
Father-sister	*nikima*	descriptive
Mother-brother	*renim*	*anolena*
Mother-sister	descriptive	like mother
Son, daughter	*belad*	*nate*, *nnasse*

Kinship Terminology—continued

	Korongo	*Mesakin*
Brother, sister—full	*bolodim*	*anobne*
Brother, sister—half	*bolodim*	*anobede*
Father-brother's children	like brother, sister	like half-brother, -sister
Father-sister's children	descriptive	*narane*
Mother-brother's children	*ninwa*	*narane*
Mother-sister's children	like brother, sister	like brother, sister
Brother's children	like son, daughter	like son, daughter
Sister's children	*olimay*	like mother-brother
Husband	*arigyo*	*pate*
Wife	*kumo*	*porr*
Wife's parents	*adoman*	*abitaba*
Husband's parents	*adoman*	*abitaba*
Son's wife	*adoman*	*abitaba*
Daughter's husband	*adoman*	*abitaba*
Brother's wife	*ananimi*	descriptive
Sister's husband.	*mananyere*	*abinaba*
Wife's brother, sister	*minyamai*	*abinaba*
Husband's brother, sister	*minyaman*	descriptive

We discover two familiar classificatory identifications, of grandfather-grandchild and parents- and children-in-law, denoting two familiar relationships: the friendly, as it were, brotherly terms on which children stand with their grandparents, and the rigid avoidances between in-laws. To start with the latter. In Mesakin the avoidance takes the form of a prohibition of eating together or in front of each other. In Korongo parents- and children-in-law may drink beer and eat meat together (though not out of the same bowl), but not food prepared from grain. Nor may these relations sit so close together, on the same bench or stone, that their bodies touch. They may shake hands with impunity, but must not place their hands on each other's arms or shoulders, lest they be punished with blindness. It is, then, contacts suggestive of physical intimacy that are forbidden. Though expressed in different concepts, this *tabu* bears out our interpretation of the in-law avoidances as springing from the sentiments of sexual shame. If the rule is broken accidentally, the offender must present a goat to the other party, by which gift one can evade the penalty. No restrictions obtain between brothers- and sisters-in-law.

It is easy to see that the realization of the grandfather-grandchild relationship is possible only if the two live in the same neighbourhood—in other words, if the child is brought up by a father or mother-brother who had in turn been brought up by his father (the child's paternal or

maternal grandfather) and continued living close to him. But the kinship system provides an alternative in the two cases not covered by this combination of circumstances, in the person of the father's mother-brother or the mother's mother-brother, both called 'grandfather'. In the structural sense, the common form defines entirely different relationships, for only one of the four 'grandfathers' shares the clan with the child (the mother's mother-brother). Nor are the four relationships quite identical from the viewpoint of concrete social relations; for the 'grandchild' may be adopted by his mother-brother squared, but by none of the other 'grandfathers' (for example, if its own mother-brothers died), and may also inherit land and property from him apart from the adoption.

The identification of brothers, which, in patrilineal kinship systems, leads to a repetitive pattern of successive and ever-widening 'brother' generations, is modified and cut short in these matrilineal societies. The children of two (or more) brothers or of two (or more) sisters become again (classificatory) 'brothers' and 'sisters', and this relationship is repeated in each subsequent generation as long as it leads through cognates of the same sex.[1] If the cognates are of opposite sex, their children call each other by a different kinship term, corresponding to 'cross-cousin', which interrupts the chain of 'brother-sister' generations. Only in the case of generations of parallel cousins, then, does the matrilineal kinship system achieve the (theoretically) unlimited expansion typical of patrilineal systems.

The relevant relationship terms in the matrilineal system, mother-brother, sister-son, and 'cross-cousin' (*ninwa* in Korongo, *narane* in Mesakin), are equally employed in a classificatory sense, and are also partly repetitive in subsequent generations. This repetitive pattern, however, is both more restricted and inconsistent than that derived from the identification of brothers. We can formulate two rules: (1) A classificatory brother (of the kind just described) becomes to the children of his 'sister' a classificatory mother-brother. (The corresponding relationship between a 'sister' and her brother's children is irrelevant.) (2) The children of 'cross-cousins', i.e. the descendants in the third generation of a brother and sister (real or classificatory), call each other's father or mother again (rather illogically) 'cross-cousin'. They call each other, however, by a descriptive term. With this generation the application of classificatory kinship terms ends.

The practical consequences of this terminological design are twofold. We realize, first, that an individual may have a very considerable number of classificatory mother-brothers or sister-sons—as he would also have a large number of 'brothers' and 'sisters'. But here the people always distinguish between the biological relationship and its classificatory

[1] We note the inconsistency in this parallel identification: 'brothers' who are the descendants of sisters will always belong to the same clan, while 'brothers' who are the descendants of brothers must belong to different clans.

equivalent. When enumerating, on my request, the complete list of their 'brothers' and 'mother-brothers', my informants always began with the 'real', biological relations, and were even apt to stop there unless I expressly asked for the inclusion also of the more distant relatives of this name. In the various kinship rights and obligations which are vested in these relationships (adoption, inheritance, blood feud) the biological kinship degree is not necessarily considered before the classificatory degree; but there is the tendency to entrust these rights and duties first to the 'nearest' relative of this degree—that is, the relative corresponding most closely to the biological paradigm. Again, the rules are fluid: the chief of Mesakin had been brought up by a classificatory mother-brother—to be exact, his maternal grandmother's sister's son. In another family precisely the same kinship degree had been rejected as 'too distant' for adoption.

The second consequence of this classificatory terminology is this: the group of relations whom one can name by kinship terms must vary greatly in width as well as depth of generation. A kinship group starting (at some point in the generation chain) from a biological brother and sister extends, if continued through brothers and sisters, only over three subsequent generations. A kinship group which runs first through, say, two generations of cognates of the same sex and then continues through cognates of the opposite sex will be traceable through two plus three generations before the kinship terms cease to be applicable. This ability of naming and tracing relationship through successive generations is of paramount importance in marriage restrictions, especially in Mesakin, where clan exogamy gives no guidance. It appears thus like a compromise designed to counter this uneven kinship range if we hear that the Mesakin accept the general rule forbidding intermarriage between descendants of brothers (and/or sisters) through four generations (whether the relationship can still be expressed in kinship terms or not). This rule has lately acquired political significance. A District Commissioner, toying with the idea of consolidating chieftainship in the Mesakin tribe by means of 'dynastic' marriages, suggested to the present chief that he should marry a descendant of his predecessor. Unfortunately, the chief and his bride-to-be turned out to be descendants of a brother and sister in the fourth generation. The chief, feeling rather unhappy that he had to decline the suggestion of the District Commissioner, confided his worries to me. As a compensation, he suggested that his son might marry into the other family, the marriage prohibition being no longer valid in the fifth generation.

The Korongo, as our kinship chart shows, give the same name both to brothers by the same mother, and thus of the same clan, and to half-brothers born of different mothers. The Mesakin, more logically, distinguish the two by different terms. This difference does not seem to be correlated with greater or lesser emphasis on paternal importance. Indeed, such correlation as we can discover appears contradictory.

For the Mesakin, who emphasize maternal descent in the kinship terminology, practise elaborate couvade, which throws into relief, symbolically, the father's role in procreation. In Korongo the couvade observances are restricted to the rule forbidding the father of the new-born —as well as, significantly, the mother-brother of the young mother—to use his axe for three days after the birth. The meaning of this oblique correlation can only be to affirm the balance between paternal and maternal importance.

We have already met with concrete evidence of this 'bilateral' balance, in inheritance and adoption. Let me add two final instances. First, clan exogamy in Korongo (as also formerly in Mesakin) is extended to the father's clan, viz. clan section. Secondly, the Korongo who, like all Nuba tribes, give their new-born a first 'mother's name', also have a second name, given by the father.[1] The father names his children, boys or girls, when they are six or seven, that is, before they are apt to leave the paternal home for the house of their mother-brother. This name has invariably a meaning, derived from some personal characteristic of the child or some event that stuck in the mind of the father at the time. Thus a boy was named Kyofun by his father, i.e. 'sleeper', because he seemed always sleepy. Another man was called Sangarigo, which means, 'Hide in the Grave', for when he was little—in the days of Mahdist raids—his father once saw a Korongo man cleverly escaping his pursuers by hiding in an open grave.

Withal, matrilineal affiliation is more heavily weighted, in utilitarian contexts as well as in acts symbolic of kinship alignment. In certain vital domains matrilineal affiliation alone counts. Thus the summons and threat of the blood feud concern only relations on the mother's side. And though inheritance of property may also follow paternal descent, the succession to tribal offices (priestship, secular leadership, so far as it exists) is matrilineal. A mother of children will receive annual gifts of grain from one of her brothers and mother-brothers, which are meant as food for her offspring: brothers and mother-brothers, it is explained, must see that these children belonging to their clan 'should not go hungry'.

In these matrilineal societies the kinship and clan affiliation of wives is self-evident, and cannot be modified by an adoption of the kind we have encountered in the patrilineal tribes. On the contrary, the incomplete partnership is emphasized by certain permanent eating restrictions: the wife must never drink milk or eat meat from cattle belonging to her husband, or indeed any milk and meat offered her in her husband's house.

This concludes our list of kinship avoidances or forms of kinship etiquette. But we may add an avoidance which bears indirectly on kinship structure. It does not concern specific kinship relations, but the

[1] Nowadays many Korongo men have a third, Arab, name as well, which they assume as adults.

One day an enemy might try to kidnap my child or steal a goat, and my husband would be unable to stop him.' Both Korongo and Mesakin make much of love as the only basis for marriage: love, with them, goes with manly valour.

At the age of fourteen or fifteen a boy already falls in love and decides to marry. Boy and girl exchange little gifts—brass rings or beads; finally, still several years before they can think of actual marriage, the suitor would approach the girl's father or mother-brother, either directly (in Korongo) or through his own mother (in Mesakin). In Korongo a first instalment of the bride-price, amounting to two he-goats and ten spears, confirms the betrothal; in Mesakin the token gift consists of beads and some wire for earrings, which the mother of the suitor presents, in the name of her son, to the girl's mother. Now one waits till the girl is sexually mature. Boy and girl are in no particular hurry to marry. In Korongo especially, early marriage of the men, which would cut short their participation in the tribal sports, is discouraged. As sexual intercourse (with girls other than one's fiancée) is quite free, the urge of sex plays no part in this respect. Thus the men do not marry till they are twenty or twenty-two; they would be four to six years older than their brides.

'Marriage' here means consummation, but not yet the full domestic union. In both tribes the consummation of marriage takes place in the house of the bridegroom's father or mother-brother, as the bridegroom himself has not yet, at the time, a house of his own. The bride spends only the nights with her husband, and returns every day to her own home. She will neither eat nor drink in the house of her in-laws. When she becomes pregnant, she stays with her own people until the child is born. Then her husband builds a new house, where she will finally join him.

In Mesakin the bridegroom must procure the bride-price in the years between the engagement and the consummation of the marriage. He will collect the customary gift of a bull or cow from his mother-brother, and start farming a grain and simsim plot, the produce of which he will exchange for goats, sheep, and other bride-price items. On his periodical visits to his bride's parents, he will ascertain the amount which they demand. The bride-price is handed over at the family feast which precedes the consummation. Then, when the wife moves into her husband's house, she takes her small dowry with her. In Korongo, the consummation of the marriage is unaccompanied by bride-price gifts; the husband pays the second, final instalment (the first having been paid at the betrothal), before he takes his wife and child into his new house. The Korongo women bring no dowry into the marriage, but the annual gifts of grain of which we have spoken, contributed by the wife's mother-brother, brother (or brothers), and sometimes father, represent, essentially, a dowry: though they are explained as food for the children, they are made even if the woman remains childless. The mother-brother contributes

two to three basketfuls, the brother one to two, the father an occasional basketful. The Mesakin have the same gift, on a smaller scale: there the woman's mother-brother sends her every year two basketfuls of grain and one of simsim. A barren woman stays two to three years with her people and then joins the household of her husband.

The value of the bride-price in Korongo and Mesakin is much smaller than in the tribes we have so far studied. It has undergone no marked changes (if any) in the course of time. It varies, however, considerably, especially in Korongo—whether more so now than of old I cannot say. This wide adaptibility merely means that everyone pays what he can. Prestige is not involved; and inability to pay even a moderately high bride-price will never disqualify a suitor.[1]

The Korongo call the bride-price *nyane*, 'things', or *nyamerid*, which means 'living things', 'animals'. It is paid in goats and spears: an average bride-price would amount to six goats and three spears (worth about 270 piastres in modern money). The largest bride-price which I recorded, of two goats and 145 spears (worth about £7 10s.), had been paid by a man who is now about 50 for his first wife, some thirty years ago. Examples of a very low bride-price are two goats and five spears (i.e. 75 piastres in money), paid about fifteen years ago, and two goats and ten spears (i.e. 90 piastres), paid two or three years ago. In theory, the young man's mother-brother should make himself responsible for the bride-price. In practice, the majority of young men produce themselves the larger portion, though they are often helped by their mother-brothers; invariably the suitor's father and brothers would contribute one or two spears each. The bride-price goes to the bride's father (even if she was brought up by her mother-brother), who may share it with his as yet unmarried sons.

The Mesakin bride-price, called *torre*, 'animals' or 'goats', is paid in goats, pigs, spears, spades, and also includes smaller gifts of oil and beads, whose value is difficult to assess. These are instances of an average bride-price: three goats, two pigs, five spears, one spade (total money value a little over £1); one goat, nine pigs, seven spears, two spades (worth 240 piastres); three goats, two pigs, seven spears, one spade (worth 140 piastres). The lowest bride-price I recorded was two goats, three spears, one spade, or 58 piastres in money. Again the suitor has to find most of his bride-price himself, possibly with the help of mother-brother (or father) and brothers, and pays it to the bride's father and brothers. The dowry is in turn contributed by the girl's father, regardless of where she grew up. It consists of three to four basketfuls of grain, three baskets of beans, one basket of simsim, and various pots and gourds.

When marrying a second wife, the man must himself produce the total bride-price. Neither Korongo nor Mesakin include farm work for

[1] The by native standards exorbitant bride-price which the Government Chiefs of Korongo and Mesakin paid for their wives is clearly an exception. The former paid three bulls and fifty spears; the latter seven cows and twenty spears.

the in-laws or gifts of produce during the period of betrothal in the bride-price obligations. In Korongo, the husband whose wife already lives in his house must send his mother-in-law one basketful of grain every year till he or she dies—or his wife leaves him.

The contribution of family members to the young man's bride-price (though it may merely be a token gift of one to two spears) and their share in the bride-price of a girl clearly represent, on a small scale, the 'contractual' aspect of the bride-price exchange. The apportionment of the bride-price defines the witnesses of the marriage and emphasizes their moral association with the marriage union and its fruits: thus the wife's brothers, who always share in the bride-price, may later adopt a child born of this marriage and, if it is a son, defray his bride-price. But these 'witnesses' do not become 'guarantors' in the sense of being financially responsible if the marriage failed in one way or another. For marriage in these tribes entails no refund of bride-price, either in divorce or widowhood—not even if the bride died not yet having borne her first child.

This follows logically from the matrilineal kinship system. It precludes our second aspect of bride-price—the 'purchase' of the woman's fertility by the husband's group—since her offspring must belong to her clan and kinship group. Here we also understand the assymetrical pattern of the bride-price transaction in Korongo and Mesakin. The bulk of the bride-price, though produced (at least potentially) by the man's mother-brother, goes to the bride's father. This recognition of biological fatherhood undoubtedly reflects the bilateral affiliation embodied also in these kinship systems. But it does more than this: for the bilateral orientation could be expressed equally in a bride-price exchange running in the opposite sense, from the man's father to the woman's mother-brother. The fact that the father is made the recipient of the bride-price negates any link between the payment and a surrender of fertility and potential progeny. Characteristically, the bride-price for a widow who does not marry again in levirate is paid, not to her husband's brothers (who might have married her), but once more to her father.

The final aspect of bride-price and marriage, involving the 'possessive' claims of bridegroom and husband, is blurred by the sexual promiscuity in these tribes. Premarital licence is complete, and chastity and virginity play no part. Indeed, the people say of themselves, 'We are like goats'. The only restraint which they admit—on sexual intercourse in the girl's home—makes them even more 'like goats': they cohabit on the farms, under rocks or in the bush, feeling little shame if they are stumbled on by a passer-by. The number of children of unmarried mothers is very large, much larger than in the other tribes, possibly because the girls marry somewhat later, when they have already been sexually mature for some time. The girls certainly do not practise abortion, although they know that, for example, the Moro do it. But in these matrilineal societies the position of illegitimate children is no problem. They belong, in any case, to the mother's family. Some men, apparently, refuse to marry a girl who had

an illegitimate child, or would at least decline to adopt the child (which would be taken by its mother-brother). But many others do not mind; they will treat the child like their own, though the various ritual and economic obligations involved in fatherhood would fall to the natural father.[1]

The only prerogative of 'possession' which the betrothal and the first bride-price payments establish is that of defending the dubious fidelity of one's bride. A young man who finds his girl friend with a lover will simply turn his back; if she is his fiancée, he will pursue and fight the rival, helped by his brothers and friends. Would-be lovers will always be more cautious with girls who are already engaged. Yet this show of possessiveness does not affect the general moral conception, which is one of complete equality of the sexes with regard to premarital, and even marital, sexual liberty. It is, however, subtly transformed in the case of one's own bride. While the young men regard it as natural that they should have literally dozens of affairs with other girls, and as equally natural (though not quite as welcome) that their betrothed should behave alike with other young men, they would refrain from premarital sexual intercourse with their own brides. Indeed, the man expects a girl who really 'loves' him to refuse herself to him; he would be quite content, in her case, with the innocent sexual play with her breasts. For sexual intercourse is believed to be physically weakening; no girl could allow the man whom she really loves, whom she desires to see shine in stick-fighting and spear-throwing contests, to dissipate his strength. Love and sexual satisfaction are thus sharply distinguished. Marriage, based on love, is also its consummation. Paradoxically, in the midst of this complete sexual licence, the betrothal embodies a claim of moral rather than material nature, which derives its essence from a self-imposed denial.

Of the three aspects of the bride-price which we discovered in patrilineal societies, only two are expressed—and expressed weakly—in these tribes. The absence of the dominant aspect in patrilineal groups, the conception of a surrender of fertility, explains, I believe, the low bride-price in Korongo and Mesakin. It cannot be derived from economic conditions: for in their general economic structure, these tribes are the equals of other, neighbouring groups like the Moro, who, patrilineal, also demand a high bride-price.

Widowhood and Divorce

For a year or two after the husband's death the widow will remain living in his house. During this time her brother-in-law will look after her and the children. If she is too old to marry again, she goes to live with her relations, either her full brother or a son or sister-son. She will not live in their house, but in a small house nearby, which her brother or son will build for her.

[1] These remarks about sexual licence and illegitimacy refer primarily to Korongo. The Mesakin admit that, to-day, the situation is the same in both tribes; but they maintain that formerly their sex morality was much less lax. How far this harking back to the good old days can be believed we must leave undecided.

A widow who is still young enough to remarry may either marry a full brother of her husband (i.e. a brother who belongs to his clan), without bride-price, or a man belonging to another clan. She is quite free to decide, and both kinds of marriage are considered equally correct. In Mesakin levirate marriage is only permitted to widows whose children are small. If her children have reached the age of eight or nine when their father died, she may under no condition marry her late husband's brother. Levirate is equally forbidden in the case of a bride whose husband died before she had her first child and left the house of her parents. In the former case the second husband pays only a nominal, in the latter case, the full bride-price. In Korongo all remarriage of widows to strangers commands the full bride-price. The meaning of the levirate rules in Mesakin is not clear. The admittance of levirate where widows are left with small children may reflect the thought that the orphaned family urgently needs male support; where the children are bigger, no such immediate support is necessary as they will by then probably have been adopted by their mother-brother. But the exclusion of the levirate marriage of childless widows seems inconsistent with the rule that their remarriage to strangers entails full bride-price. If the former indicates the (logical) lack of interest in the potential progeny on the part of the late husband's kin, the latter appears to imply such an interest on the part of the second husband; unless—and this must be the explanation—the full bride-price for childless widows merely represents an appreciation of their 'unspoiled' youth.

The children of a widow will mostly be adopted by their mother-brother. If they are fairly grown up, perhaps thirteen or fourteen, they may continue living in their father's house, but their mother-brother, or possibly an adult brother or sister, would look after them. In Mesakin children whose mother married a stranger sometimes follow her to her husband's home; yet this is rare, for the relations between the stepfather and the children of his wife are nearly always strained.

Both tribes recognize divorce. In Mesakin the divorce settlement varies according to the length of the marriage and the grounds for the divorce. If a man and woman had been married, say, ten years, and then decide to separate, the ex-husband can claim no refund of the bride-price, not even if the divorce were the result of the misconduct of the wife. For the two 'have eaten too long of the same food'. If, on the other hand, a husband divorced his wife after two or three years of married life, and if he could prove that the fault was not his, he could demand the refund of the bride-price from the woman's father. The rule is by no means rigidly defined. My informants were not certain, for example, what the situation would be in divorce after a marriage that had lasted five years. In these and similar difficulties, the old men of the two families come together and settle the case, always without animosity. Often, too, the wife's father may be unable to refund the whole bride-price, in which case even big reductions will always be accepted. The second husband

of the divorced wife pays, in either case, only the same nominal bride-price which is also demanded in widow marriage. The initiative in divorce, I may add, is often the man's. I have been told of several cases in which the husband sent his wife back to her people merely because he had tired of her.

The desire, at least, on the part of men to rid themselves of wives of whom they have tired is equally visible in Korongo. But they allow themselves more often to be dissuaded by the wife's or their own relations. The women, on the other hand, are much less amenable to persuasion. Wives who 'no longer love' their husbands simply leave them and return to their own people; brides who have undergone a change of heart refuse to go on with the marriage. Most men will do their best to regain their wives or brides. A husband may, day after day, turn up at the house of his wife's mother-brother to make certain that it is there she returned, and that no other man is involved. No husband would believe in a spontaneous, simple change of heart. If, or when, he discovers the rival who stole the affection of his wife, he will challenge him to a fight or (nowadays) cite him in the court. The outcome of the fight, if favourable to the husband, might induce the fickle wife to return to the marital hearth; more often, it appears, its power of persuasion is nil. His revenge satisfied, the husband would acquiesce in the separation.

Separations of every kind are frequent, the love-match of Korongo notwithstanding. If the bride broke off the engagement or marriage before she joined her husband in his house, her second husband will have to pay the outstanding portion of the bride-price to the girl's father. The ex-bridegroom or -husband is not entitled to a refund. If the wife was already living with him and he had paid the full bride-price, her second marriage will be without bride-price. The marriage contract is thus not renewed in marriage after divorce. The absence of a bride-price payment indicates that, theoretically, marriage is indissolvable, and that the remarriage after separation, though admitted in practice, remains an essentially illegitimate union.[1] As the affiliation of children is independent of the legality or illegality of the marriage, this interpretation of divorce and remarriage is of no practical consequence. But modern legal changes have considerably altered the attitude of the people. The situation to-day is this: in divorce cases involving adultery of the wife, the court imposes a fine of £1 to £2 on the paramour, which must be paid before the divorce becomes effective and the woman and her lover are allowed to marry. The husband can claim no indemnity. The fine, amounting to a licence-fee for remarriage, clearly lends to remarriage after divorce that legal recognition which traditional practice had denied it. The people are becoming conscious of this change in the conception of separation and divorce.

[1] So far as I know the Korongo are the only Nuba tribe which admits this permanent union of man and woman without the formal ties of marriage (*see* p. 119). But the union is neither clandestine nor branded as immoral. It approximates to marriage rather than to love affairs, it is spoken of as 'marriage', and the tendency to legitimize it is, as we shall see presently, strongly pronounced.

During my stay in Korongo a number of old men approached me, suggesting that a radical change of customary law was indicated. They thought that a refund of the bride-price or some sort of indemnity to the ex-husband should be allowed. They were suggesting, in other words, a transaction which would carry the legitimization of remarriage after divorce to its logical end. The chief, however, rejected all suggestions of change, and was supported in this attitude by other men of more orthodox leanings. The legal situation, with its modern demands and traditional objections, is most confused. Take the following case:

The wife of a Korongo man had deserted him for another man whom she desired to marry. When the case was taken to court by the husband, wife and paramour denied that misconduct had taken place. Nevertheless, the paramour was fined £1 for having alienated the woman's affection. After having paid the fine, he married the woman. After one month, however, the woman experienced another change of heart and returned to husband No. 1. Husband No. 2 now demanded a refund of the fine—which, to him, represented merely a licence-fee for a marriage which had not come off. The chief had to reject the claim, as the fine had already been paid into the Government coffers. But he felt that there was some justice in the claim. So, in order to satisfy the claimant, he promised him 60 piastres, which he would recover from the first husband on the grounds that the latter had now got his wife back. Husband No. 1, curiously enough, paid up, again evidently under the impression that marriage or remarriage to-day must be legalized by payments.

Inheritance

The rules of inheritance reflect the bilateral and, in a sense, ambiguous and undecided nature of the kinship system. The legal titles, loosely framed, admit of disputes and frequently lead to serious quarrels, in Mesakin even to fratricide, real or imaginary (through witchcraft). The fluidity of the rules is emphasized, and restrained at the same time, by the practice of making a will. The family head will make it known to his wife and brothers, often long before he expects to die, how he desires to distribute his property. He would consider who among his heirs needs this or that kind of property most; he might want to ensure that his sons should not be deprived of their due by his sister-sons; or he might designate the sister-son whom he loved best as the main heir, disinheriting another nephew towards whom he felt less friendly. In making this will, one is, however, still bound by convention: one can exclude or favour an individual relative, but one cannot deny or upset the customary titles to inheritance vested in specific kinship degrees. Thus a man cannot cut off all his sister-sons from the inheritance, whatever his feelings; or, in bequeathing livestock to sons besides sister-sons (who are the primary heirs of this type of property), he could not allot more than one animal to each son.

Trusteeship plays an important part in the inheritance of the two

tribes. If a man dies who has no sister-sons, his sister-daughters would receive the property normally bequeathed to sister-sons, in trust for their own sons until the latter reach marriageable age. If only one of several brothers entitled to inherit livestock from a mother-brother is old enough at the time to claim the patrimony, he will be expected to share it later with his younger brothers. Land, finally, often goes from a man to his 'grandsons', i.e. his sister-daughter's sons, if his own sister-sons were, at the time of his death, all provided with farm land.

We shall later hear of certain customary gifts of one or two cows which young men, on reaching full adolescence, can claim from their mother-brothers. Though representing a specific, independent obligation, these gifts are often regarded as an anticipated inheritance. The young man would demand the gift from the mother-brother whose livestock he expects to inherit; and mother-brothers, in turn, tend to make the sister-sons on whom they bestowed these early gifts also their main heirs. In a typical case, which I recorded in Mesakin, a young man demanded the gift from a certain mother-brother because the latter had inherited the bulk of the livestock property of his (the young man's) 'grandfather', which the 'grandson' must ultimately inherit; characteristically, the mother-brother refused the gift on the same grounds—namely, that the young man had no title to his mother's mother-brother's property. The older man later gave way, being afraid of witchcraft: for in this grievance as in disappointment over inheritance witchcraft is considered the accepted retaliation.

The rules of inheritance differ only slightly in the two tribes, and can thus be dealt with together. Men's property first:

'Far' farms go, in Korongo, invariably to sister-sons, and in Mesakin to the sociological sons of the deceased (i.e. either his sister-sons, if they were living with him, or his real sons). House farms go, with the house, to the sociological sons, in Mesakin sometimes also to the full brother of the deceased. The small house-plot which, in Korongo, belongs to the wife, remains hers until she remarries, when it falls to the heir of the house.

Livestock, money, guns and, in Korongo, shields are inherited by sister-sons. Personal property, such as spears, spades, knives, ornaments, is, in Korongo, divided among sons (who receive the larger share) and sister-sons; in Mesakin the sister-sons are the main heirs, but must distribute two to three spears to each son of the deceased.

The grain standing on the farm and stored in the granaries is as a rule divided between the widow and the brothers of the deceased.

The small property of the women—ornaments, produce (simsim and beans), possibly an animal or two—goes to her sister's daughter or sometimes sister.

Adolescence and Adulthood

The regulation of adolescence in Korongo is more elaborate and more highly ritualized than in the sister tribe. But both groups show the

same conceptions of individual growth and use the same ritual elements in elaborating the main phases: they concentrate on *rites de passage* of girls, and link male adolescence with the changing aptitude for virile sports. Let me begin with the simpler system, of the Mesakin, which is also the system on which I have less data.

The events which mark early youth are identical in both tribes. Children of eight or ten have their lower incisors broken out; this operation is performed with a spear-head by some man who is considered skilful and experienced. He would charge nothing for it. Boys and young men occasionally have little patterns of parallel lines or stars tattooed on the skin of their chests and bellies; they have no significance beyond 'looking nice'. Girls are cicatricized, in similar patterns, on upper arms, belly and buttocks when they begin to menstruate. In Mesakin, unlike Korongo, the first menstruation is not surrounded by a ritual, nor does it mark a definite phase in adolescence. Young girls are called *nmasse* till their breasts fill out, when they become known as *sirre*; this name they keep till they are married and have children, and are called *porr* (which is also the kinship term for 'wife').

Every year towards the end of the dry season, girls and brides go through a period of seclusion known as the 'entering of the granary'. This seclusion is compulsory in the case of brides who are pregnant and who will join their husbands in the coming year. It takes place in the house where the bride has been brought up. But she must not spend the period of seclusion by herself; one or two younger girls among her relations—sisters, cousins, sister-daughters—will join her, and they will all go through the ritual together. Unmarried girls may 'enter the granary' only once, and then again when they become pregnant for the first time. The period of seclusion lasts roughly one month, ending with the performance of the annual pre-sowing ceremony of the tribe. During this month the girls must observe certain rigid avoidances. They sleep, not in their usual sleeping-hut, but in the hut which serves as granary. They must not be visited or seen by strangers; they never leave the house in daylight, and at night only to relieve themselves. They wear no clothes of any description, but smear themselves every day all over with ashes and plaster their hair with a batter of ashes and grain chaff. They must refrain from all work, save threading beads for ornaments, and are fed by their adult relations. Finally, when their time is over, the mother-brother (or father) of the pregnant girl kills a he-goat and invites his relations to a family meal, after which the girls are allowed to return into the world.

The people are not aware of any inner connexion between this observance and the tribal fertility rite with which it is linked in time. Their interpretation of the seclusion is that it 'should make the girls fat'. Now, corpulence in girls is for the men of Mesakin (as of Korongo) a most attractive and desirable feature; the period of seclusion thus heralds both motherhood and a phase of adolescence in which sexual attraction

will have full play: it represents, essentially, an initiation into the consciousness of sex.

In Korongo this period of seclusion is more conspicuously an initiation and *rite de passage*. It centres round the onset of puberty, being observed at the occasion of the first menstruation. It has thus no seasonally fixed beginning: when a girl menstruates for the first time she immediately 'enters the granary'. But the period of seclusion is divided in two parts; a lighter segregation first, followed by a severe seclusion, which is bound up more closely with the seasonal calendar of the tribe. It begins in March and ends about three months later, after the sowing is finished and the new grain stands hand-high. The first period must last at least three months. If the first menstruation happened less than three months before the severe seclusion is due to begin, the girl must stay in the lighter seclusion till the next sowing season comes round, i.e. for a whole year and so-and-so many (one to three) months. Girls from different houses do not go through the seclusion together; but if there is a younger girl in the same house, she will 'enter the granary' with her older sister or cousin, merely to keep her company; it would not count in her own case. The girls paint crude human figures in white on the outside walls of the house, so that everyone should know that here girls have 'entered the granary'. Throughout the whole period of segregation the girls are forbidden to do any work and may not leave the house during the day. During the first three months, however, they may see visitors, including their bridegrooms (if they are already betrothed), who would come every two or three days and, on their first visit, present their bride with a spear. During the severe seclusion no strangers and no young relatives, male or female, may see the girls; of male visitors, only the father and mother-brother are allowed. If a stranger were to see the girls, they 'would not grow fat'.

The girls leave the seclusion on the same day in the whole hill community. Very early in the morning the girl, with other female friends and relations, goes to the well. She carries an ebony-pointed spear and a small gourd, both given her by her father. She draws water in her small gourd and at once rushes back home. Boys and young men with twigs in their hands wait for her on the way, and beat her as she runs past them. Safely home again, she waits for the others to arrive. Her father sprinkles her with beer and water, rubs some oil on the point of her spear, and ties a new string of beads round her neck. Her future mother-in-law brings her a new pair of sandals, beads, rings, and oil for anointing. Her bridegroom, too, brings gifts: a gazelle-horn for her, which she will tie to her waist, and a he-goat and two to four spears for her people. The girl is painted all white with ashes and milk. Thus adorned, she will join the big dance which, uniting the whole community, concludes the event. In this dance, which is called *tyom*, the girls who were released from the seclusion are carried on the shoulders of their women relations. The different hill communities of Korongo perform

this rite in turn, a few days after one another. The rotation seems to change every year: one year Tabany would start, and Angolo follow; the next year Angolo would be the first, Tabany second, and so forth. The people from different communities visit one another's celebrations. On the same occasion the girl's father must present her with a bull, and the mother-brother with a cow. The animals become the girl's property, which she will keep, with the offspring, for her future children. We note the neat correspondence between the sex of the gift animal and the nature of the kinship link—patrilineal and matrilineal—with their donor.

The young boys in Mesakin are called *nate*[1] till they reach puberty. When their pubic hair has grown, and when, in common parlance, they 'want women', they become known as *kaduma*. In this state they remain till they have become fathers and are called *mede*, men. The state of *kaduma* thus encloses the most important phases of adolescence: the first experience of sex, betrothal, and, finally, marriage; during that period, too, they form their friendships among the age mates with whom they live out in the cattle camps, and they devote themselves to the tribal sports: wrestling first, and later, when they grow a little older and stronger, the more dangerous spear-fighting.

The three names, *nate*, *kaduma*, and *mede*, stand for phases of adolescence and age groups, not for age-grades in the narrow sense. We find no corporate grouping of age mates (save the fluid, close personal relations which arise between the boys and men who share a common cattle camp), and no formal, collective promotion. But the transition from one phase to the other is marked by events of formal nature and public celebrations which correspond to promotion, though they remain dependent on the initiative of individuals and families. Thus when the boy joins his first wrestling tournament his father or mother-brother will present him with cow tails, which form an essential attribute of his battle dress. His father (irrespective of where the boy was living) will arrange a big beer feast in his house, with many guests, and will himself dress his son in the numerous scarves, belts, metal ornaments, and cow tails in which the young fighter will appear for the first time in the ring. Also, when becoming *kaduma*, the young man will collect the gift of a cow from his mother-brother, and a goat or sheep from his father; he will use it later for his bride-price. These are the gifts of which we have spoken before as an 'anticipated inheritance'. The young man regards them as compulsory, and would deeply resent their refusal. He would tell everybody how unfairly he had been treated, and would have public opinion wholly on his side. Indeed, it would be considered natural if the disappointed young man revenged himself by means of witchcraft, and the early death of an obstinate mother-brother would invariably be attributed to this cause. The attainment of *kaduma* age can, in a sense, be compared to the 'coming of age'; for it implies the

[1] This term, as the corresponding Korongo word, also means 'son'.

handing over of the livestock patrimony that had been kept in trust for the young man.

The life of adolescents runs an identical course in the two tribes. But the Korongo, multiplying the stations through which it must pass, render its turns and phases more explicit. The 'stations' are marked by the participation in tribal sports of increasing severity. Young boys, till they reach puberty (and before they join in any of the tribal games), are called *belad*. Afterwards, for two or three years, they are known as *dere*. At this age they fight in the lighter, local wrestling matches. They already have (illicit) sexual intercourse, and some will also be betrothed. When they reach the next grade, *adere*, they will be qualified to join in the more severe wrestling contests, called *tabany*, which are often fought between different villages and communities. A severest variety of wrestling, displayed above all during funeral feasts, is reserved for the next higher grade, *adumok*. But the young men of this grade practise wrestling only for a year or two, and then turn to spear-fighting instead. They are all married—that is, have consummated marriage—though many will still live in the cattle camps. When they become fathers and house-owners, the men are known as *asudagan*. They still appear in the spear contests, but after a few years they will abandon this sport also. Individual life ends in the age group of the *tgif*, the 'old men', which is only a name, since it is not correlated with any precise definition of membership or status.

The length of time which individuals spend in each of the adolescent grades is subject to no rule. It depends entirely on the fluid criterion of maturity and physical development, and the arbiters of this are the fathers of the young men. They decide when boys are old enough and sufficiently advanced physically to be 'promoted' to a higher age group and to join its more exacting games. The father implements the promotion by investing his son ceremonially with the fighting garb peculiar to the grade before the young man enters, for the first time, the new contest. If the boy is living with his mother-brother, the latter will send a message to the boy's father (or eldest brother, if the father is dead), informing him that 'the boy has grown strong, it is time to dress him'. This investiture and promotion is, in fact, known as *taduwanyam*, the 'putting on of things'.

The investiture which marks the promotion of a young boy to *dere* is on a simple scale: the boy's father buys a piece of white cloth, which is cut in four strips and tied, scarf-like, round the boy's waist and neck. The boy is 'dressed' in the house where he is living; a little beer has been prepared, and neighbours and relations come to watch. After their first appearance in the ring, the boys take their dress no longer very seriously, but often appear only with a leather belt round the waist.

The dress is more important, and the investiture more elaborate, when the *dere* becomes *adere*. This time the ceremony takes place in the house of the father. He has killed a he-goat (which will be eaten by the numerous

guests), skinned it and cut off the hair and tail. The skin is cleaned, rolled with a stone to soften it, and then cut into strips. These strips are spooled over a stiff piece of cow or giraffe hide, and bent into a hoop which the wrestler will wear round his waist. The father also prepares a cow tail, and several scarves cut from coloured cloth. On the morning of the tournament relatives and neighbours arrive. They eat and drink, and then the father dresses the boy for the occasion: goat and cow tails and the leather hoop are placed round his waist, the goat's hair is fastened to the belt, and the pieces of coloured cloth are tied round his chest. Now the men among the guests who, in their youth, have been great wrestlers, stage a practice fight, teaching the novice a little of the higher art of wrestling. Thus adorned and fortified, the *adere* goes out to his first fight. On the same occasion he is presented by his mother-brother with a bull (the 'anticipated inheritance' of our previous discussion).

The *tabany* wrestling contests for which this investiture is the preparation always take place between January and April. The various families which have sons who have just reached *adere* age will mostly choose the same day for this investiture, so that the *adere* novices of the community join their first *tabany* tournament together. The attainment of this age class is thus made the occasion for a public and nearly (never rigidly) collective promotion.

For the young men who become *adumok* the dressing ceremony of the *adere* is repeated, the *adumok* wearing the additional decoration of brass bells tied to their waist. These bells are gifts of father or mother-brother, as this whole investiture may be arranged by either relative. Sometimes the mother-brother repeats his gift of a bull on this occasion.

The common investiture and public appearance of the *adere* novices represent the nearest approach to the collective scale of age-grade systems proper. In Korongo as in Mesakin the age class is in no way a corporate group; the ties that count are those of personal contacts and friendship between boys (of the same or different age) who share the same cattle camp. They will appear together, forming small solid groups, at the tournaments and other festive occasions. In daily life, the boys and young men belonging to different age classes carry no distinctive emblems, and are not dressed in different fashion, typical of their status. It is always difficult to tell exactly to which age class they belong: one can only judge (often erroneously) by their physical development.

Only in the context of the tribal games, and here rather vaguely, does the order of age classes become an order of rank, implying corporate superiority and inferiority, and the giving and taking of commands. We also discover traces of that bracketing of alternate age classes which is typical of other Nuba age-grade systems. Thus when the *dere* wrestle, the *adumok* (but also older men) will act as their 'seconds', help them with their preparations, and generally look after them; the *asndagan* do the same for the *adere*. After an impressive victory, the wrestler would often be lifted on the shoulders of his friends and carried round the arena in

triumph: but sometimes he would be led outside, an older man would plant himself in front of him, a twig in his hand, and lash the wrestler viciously twice or three times across the chest. The young fellow, almost stunned by the blow, will make brave attempts to show his unconcern and resume the dainty trip which the wrestlers affect. This punishment is meted out only to bigger *dere*, who will most probably become *adere* the coming year. Its purpose is to 'make them strong', its meaning, obviously a test of manhood and the eligibility for the higher grade.

We need not dwell longer on the wrestling contests, which correspond closely to those practised in other Nuba tribes. Let me say a few words about the, to us, new sport of spear-fighting. These combats are called *kafony*, and are fought with tall bamboo spears, 9–11 ft. long, with long ebony points tied to the bamboo shaft; the sharp point is dulled by ramming a small piece of wood over it. For protection, the fighters carry heavy round shields of giraffe or cow hide. The fights are always between two men. They stand facing each other across a distance of about 12 yds. They throw their spears in turn, first one man, then the other, then the first man again, till their supply of spears is exhausted and the next pair takes the ring. The attacker runs forward about 3 yds., and from there throws his spear at the other man. To parry the blow, one crouches behind one's shield, moving it this way and that, to catch the spear full on the shield. If the man's balance is not secure, the blow may cause him to topple backwards. Often the spear breaks in the impact, and the flying splinters may cause grievous hurts (among the onlookers more than the fighters). It is fatal to use an old, patched shield which could easily be pierced. If the older men who act as seconds discovered an unserviceable shield, they would at once exclude its owner from the fight; often, as I could witness, they discover it too late.

Not everyone is a master in both games, wrestling and spear-fighting. Some prefer one, others the other: when they die, the game in which they were proficient will be staged at their funeral feast. Boys whose growth is slow will avoid wrestling. They might be teased by friends and elders, but always pleasantly, for everyone realizes that different individuals develop differently and at different speed. If the boys catch up later and turn straight to spear-fighting, they are vindicated. But if they shirk this adult sport also, there can be no more excuse: they have shown themselves weaklings and cowards, and deserve the contemptible name of homosexuals.

Although spear-fighting is the more dangerous sport, demanding higher skill, it is (in the eyes of the Korongo) physically less exacting. The changing from the severe variety of wrestling to spear-fighting is explained as reflecting the gradual loss of youthful vigour; and the latter is, in turn, seen as a result of marriage and regular cohabitation. Both tribes feel strongly that marriage and sex life are inimical to physical strength. People would state as a general rule: 'Once you are married you can no longer wrestle' (or, in Mesakin, spear-fight). Practice to some extent

belies this statement, and men who are married, even fathers of children, still join in the combats and tournaments. Indeed, the reluctance of the men to abandon the manners of youth for the settled existence of husbands and family heads is both greater and more articulate than in any other Nuba tribe. Young married men of the *adumok* age class will spend four or five nights with their wives in the village and then return for a fortnight or month to the cattle camp; some build themselves separate huts in the camp and make their brides visit them there, by night, quite against the rules. They would tell you that they 'dislike living in the village'. I have met even men of forty and fifty who spent most of their nights with the young folk in the cattle camps instead of at home in the village. It was, they insisted, a matter of preference. But the preference went so far that the older men, like the young lads, smeared their bodies with ashes, in cattle camp fashion: a custom meant to 'make one strong'.

Behind this grudging submission to marital and adult life in general, behind the secondary sentiments of fondness of camp life and male company, we discover the primary, and quite open, fear of sex as the destroyer of virility. Not sex in the ephemeral, physical sense—the adolescent incontinence of these tribes precludes this—but sex transformed into a permanent fetter, spiritual (as love) and social (as marriage). We will not probe the psychological depth of this antagonism. Let me only point out two things: first, that it occurs in a matrilineal society, that is, a society in which the fruits of procreation are not the man's. And, secondly, that it is accompanied, not only by the strong emphasis on male companionship, but also, in the domain of the abnormal, by widespread homosexuality and transvesticism.

The cult of manliness in these tribes is not a cult of aggressiveness and pugnacity. It fosters the ideals of strength, fitness, valour, untinged with the exuberance of willed destruction. Skill in spear-fighting was, of old, a practical necessity. In these groups, with their large herds, the young herdsmen had need to be proficient fighters to protect themselves and their charges from the ever threatening raiders. But the cultures show no trace of that glorification of war as such, of raiding and killing, which we found in other tribes committed to ideals of virility. It is perhaps significant that the most frequent combats which occur in these groups, over women, are fought with an uncommon weapon, sticks, and not with spears, in the use of which the men are so carefully trained.

Also the ideals of virility are essentially individualistic. In the age classes combats are fought, and victories won, not in the spirit of teams or corporate groups, but as purely individual achievements. This is the clearest instance. We have heard that the boys of *dere* age fight only in the lighter local tournaments; if, however, one of them is strong for his age, his family or friends will make him join the heavier, inter-group fights, from which his age companions would remain excluded. These bigger wrestling and spear-fighting tournaments always unite fighters (and

camp followers) from different villages and communities. But this grouping is fluid and irregular: it follows casual contacts, friendship or kinship links, as it does also in the great tournaments with which funeral feasts are celebrated. It does not endorse any definite collectivity, certainly not the tribe. Even the indirect integration embodied in the sequence and rotation of the female puberty rites throughout Korongo is absent in the domain of man's actions—that is, of actions which spell the political existence of the group.

Political System

We are once more dealing with 'stateless' societies. The diffuse political sovereignty which is typical of such societies is vested, in Mesakin, in the tribe, and in Korongo in the hill community. Between these 'sovereign' groups obtained that lawlessness which allowed of attacks and raids, unpunished save by the chance revenge of war. The political boundaries in Korongo were loosely defined. It is not clear, for example, how far the hill communities in the north chain acted as independent, mutually hostile groups: according to some informants, Tabany, the strongest and most feared community, always attacked its neighbours; but Tabany is also said to have entered a close offensive and defensive union with Dimondongo, the other large community in North Korongo. Of Buram, the little Mesakin community in the north-west corner, we know positively that, regardless of the long proximity, it remained an 'enemy' to its Korongo neighbours. The Korongo communities in the south chain, Dar and Angolo, always regarded each other as well as their northern fellow tribesmen as enemies.

The relations of friend and enemy in Korongo were further blurred by the irregular distribution of clans. Killing between members of the same clan falls under the special laws governing these most hideous of crimes, clan crimes. As the same clans occur in different communities in the tribe legitimate warfare might at any moment turn into a crime, or sin, and chance revenge give way to the ordained retribution. Indeed, when attacking another community, the people bore this danger constantly in mind and tried, so far as it was in their power (for one does not know all one's clan relations in other communities) to spare their fellow clansmen. Or one might inadvertently kill members of some other clan existing in one's own community and thus provoke a blood feud. The impersonal hostility of groups at war would thus give way to the specific enmity of individuals and families pursuing vengeance. Only in this sense, as implying the potential emergence of clan crimes and blood feuds within its confines, did the Korongo tribe as such acquire a political identity.[1]

[1] The sister communities of Korongo, Tesh and Fama, counted in this respect as sections of the 'tribe'. I am not certain how far the reputedly identical clans of Korongo and Mesakin were regarded as identical when it came to warfare and the settlement of blood feuds.

Disregarding the early, semi-mythical periods of tribal history, this wide and in a sense illogical distribution of identical clans over warring local groups was due to two factors: first, to migration, which in turn was often, if not predominantly, the result of blood feuds; and, secondly, to intermarriage. One might wonder at the coexistence of this eternal warfare and intermarriage. The enmity between communities did not preclude peaceful relations between individuals and kinship groups, nor the occasions on which such bonds were tied and perpetuated. The tribal wars, of limited and discontinuous nature, admitted of little enclaves of peace—the common attendance of rituals, kinship feasts, funerals, tournaments. But 'peace' slipped easily into 'war'. 'We would all go together', said a Korongo informant, 'to a wrestling tournament in another village. It would be a great feast. But afterwards, on the way home, the people would begin to fight; one group would try to capture and carry off a man or woman of another group; often, too, there would be killing.'

The Tribal Code

Matrimonial Offences. So far as they bear on the clan or kindred (i.e. exogamy, incest, and their variants) these offences are not subject to secular justice or retaliation. Ordinary adultery and seduction lead to the familiar self-help of husbands. A spontaneous brawl, when the husband catches the paramour *in flagrante delicto*, will generally be followed by a more formal fight. Or a husband whom friends or relatives have informed of the infidelity of his wife will collect brothers and sister-sons and ambush the paramour on the road or on the farms. The paramour, forewarned, will have surrounded himself similarly with his relatives. Often the whole groups will fight, armed with sticks and shields; sometimes the two men will meet each other in a single duel, and the relatives will act as seconds to prevent serious injuries. Both the spontaneous assaults and the formal fights rarely have fatal results. Which of the rivals is to carry off the prize rests ultimately with the woman. But a physically weak husband might guess the outcome, and would never force the issue.

Property Offences. The same principle of self-help is also appealed to against thieves. The owner of the stolen property collects relations and friends; armed with sticks and shields, they attack the thief in his house, or raid his herds, and carry off the stolen goods or animals or their equivalent. They would not feel entitled to take more. In Mesakin, it seems, one could also appeal to the 'chief' (of whom more presently), who might prevail on the thief to return the stolen property. The chief's action would not go beyond enforcing restitution.

Homicide. Both tribes distinguish three categories of homicide, according to the social units that are affected: homicide between different clans; homicide between members of the same clan in the wider, 'theoretical' sense; and homicide in a narrower group within the clan,

which is in Mesakin the matrilineal kinship group,[1] and in Korongo the clan section which defines itself vaguely as the progeny of a 'common grandfather'. We will start with the last category.

In Mesakin the murder of a kinsman is not the rare, almost unheard-of crime it is in many tribes. I recorded without difficulty four cases which happened in the last ten to fifteen years (three fratricides and one murder of a mother-brother). This crime occurs almost invariably in the course of quarrels over inheritance, real or 'anticipated', or in connexion with accusations of witchcraft. It is a sin rather than a crime. No revenge or retaliation is allowed. But if the murderer ate with his family (which he could hardly avoid, unless he were prepared to exile himself), leprosy would visit him, and possibly his brothers and sisters-sons as well. None of the murderers whose cases I recorded chose self-exile; all, my informants stated, duly became leprous. A certain purification sacrifice, which is to ward off the supernatural punishment in ordinary homicide, might also be performed in these crimes; but one hardly expects it to work. It was, in fact, performed in three of the four cases which I mentioned—in vain.

Revenge or retaliation are equally excluded if clansmen kill each other. But here the sacrifice is likely to have effect, and after its performance the kinship groups of murderer and victim would mostly be able to eat together with impunity. The murderer is also made to present a cow to the mother-brother of the victim.

The Korongo remember no cases of homicide between close kinship relations. Homicide within the clan section, however, does occur, and entails the rules which we have just outlined, though precluding the purification rites. There is, then, no way to banish the threat of leprosy. In theory, this punishment would take effect only if the relatives of the murderer shared food or drink with other people from their clan section. But this is almost impossible to avoid; especially as in Korongo this avoidance and its sanction apply, not to the murderer himself or his generation, but, on an ever-widening scale, to his descendants (in the clan sense, i.e. his sister-children and 'grandchildren'). I was told of the case of a certain Akollom in Tabany, who had shot a clansfellow in the dark of the night, mistaking him for a leopard. Nothing happened to Akollom himself or his brothers; but all his sister-children became leprous.[2]

Homicide within the clan at large—our 'theoretical' clan—still precludes

[1] The people would speak of homicide between 'relations who call each other (full) brother or sister, or mother-brother' (which term is also applied to sister-sons or -daughters). No mention is made of parents and children—but here homicide is said never to occur. The same is alleged with regard to half-brothers; as fratricide is almost invariably caused by quarrels over inheritance (which cannot concern half-brothers), this statement may well be true. Nor have I been able to record a case.

[2] This delayed sanction of Korongo is unique among the Nuba tribes which I have studied. No traces of it are found in the sister culture, Mesakin. The very uniqueness of this feature forbids its explanation in terms of 'meaning' and 'purpose'.

revenge, but admits both of purification rites and of blood money. The latter amounts to ten cows, but not all of it is blood money in the narrow sense: the murderer himself slaughters six cows at the purification sacrifice and pays the rest to the sister-son or mother-brother of the victim. In a sense, this observance represents an intermediate solution between the rules governing killing in the same clan section (excluding both blood money and revenge) and the rules governing homicide between different clans (admitting both revenge and blood money). We may note also that this conception of a clan crime presents the only instance in which the large, 'theoretical' clan of Korongo appears as an effective social unit.

Surprisingly, the horror of killing a kinsman or 'near' clan relative has not made the Mesakin and Korongo forbid spear-fighting contests between such relations. On the contrary: the big spear-fights staged at funeral feasts are as a rule opened by brothers of the deceased, matched against each other.

Homicide between different clans of the Mesakin tribe is said to have been rare. I recorded only two instances, which occurred a great many years ago. Let me quote one, which may well serve as an illustration of the methods—or one of the methods—of dealing with this crime. A young man of the Silla clan killed an older man, of the Kadone clan, accidentally in a spear-fight. The relatives of the victim thereupon attacked the other kinship group, captured a young man of the same age as the victim, a classificatory sister-son of the murderer, and killed him in turn. Afterwards the two kinship groups met to perform the purification sacrifice. They killed a pig and a sheep; they cut the animals up, put small pieces of meat in their mouths, and spat them out again. They drank some of the blood of the animals mixed with water; they dipped their hands into it, snapped fingers with one another, and, finally, smeared the blood on their heads, arms, and chests. Afterwards they roasted the animal over the fire and, both groups together, ate the meat. With this blood ritual and sacrificial meal they ended the eating avoidance, punished with leprosy, which had sprung up between them after the (first) murder.

The eating avoidance and the threat of leprosy, however, affect not only the kinship groups concerned but the whole clans. The act of revenge may fall both on the kinship groups and on the clans at large, as would also the vicarious expiation. The narrower or wider orbit of the blood feud is purely a matter of expediency. If the murder had been committed between men of the same or neighbouring localities the revenge would be carried out only by full brothers and sister-sons of the victim, against brothers or sister-sons of the culprit. But if the killing had been between families living at some distance it would prove difficult to secure retaliation on this narrow basis; the avengers could not risk to enter the camp of the enemy, and would depend on meeting their quarry by chance, on the road, at a communal gathering, and so forth. They thus throw their net more widely: every man of the clan is charged with the pursuit of revenge, and every clansman of the culprit (if otherwise eligible)

threatened with death. The retaliation must always be exact in age, sex, and numbers.

Often the murderer and his near relatives who fear revenge flee from their village to another hill or tribe. They will be reasonably safe: from physical retribution, since their enemies are far, and their hosts would protect them; and from supernatural punishment, since it would be easy, in the strange community, to observe the eating avoidance with the victim's kinsmen or clan. But a blood feud never dies a natural death. Its memory is handed on from generation to generation. Years afterwards, when only children or grandchildren of the murderer and victim are alive, it might flare up again if chance or forgetfulness brought the two groups together. This is an instance:

About thirty years ago a man was killed in Buram—the exact circumstances are forgotten. The homicide, with his brothers and sister-sons, fled to Tozari, where they lived undisturbed for about twenty years. The murderer himself and the victim's brothers had died when, some ten years ago, the sister-sons of the homicide visited a funeral feast and wrestling tournament in Buram. There they met, and were recognized by the sister-sons of the victim. They were at once attacked with spears and sticks, and in the fierce fight two of them were killed, while they killed one of their attackers. The total number of killed, including the original victim, now being two on each side, the blood feud finally lapsed.

Sometimes, to escape revenge, the family of the culprit would offer the mother-brother of the victim blood money. It is known as *kamsu*, and amounts to three to four cows. If the mother-brother accepts it—which he might not always do—the purification sacrifice of pig and sheep is performed as after an accomplished revenge, and similarly terminates feud and avoidance.

Blood feud implying exact retaliation, flight, and blood money, all reappear in Korongo, slightly changed. The revenge devolves on the kinship relations on the clan-side, i.e. full brothers, mother-brothers, and sister-sons (real or classificatory). Some informants held that the whole group of 'near' clan relations, i.e. the exogamous clan section, would undertake the pursuit of the blood feud. It could be ended only by killing, if not the murderer himself, his full-brother, mother-brother or sister-son. An informant, whom I had asked to tell me the names of all his kinship relations of the same clan, his—real or classificatory—brothers, mother-brothers and sister-sons, concluded the enumeration by saying: 'Now you know all the people who, if I killed anyone, would be afraid' (of revenge). Until the deed is expiated, the whole clan sections of murderer and victim are forbidden to eat or drink together; the sanction, leprosy, would again affect only the coming generations. If the original homicide has been 'squared' by exact retaliation, the blood feud and its avoidances lapse automatically, and no further rituals or sacrifices are necessary.

These rituals become necessary if revenge is replaced by another, peaceful, settlement—blood money, compensation, or—a new practice—the offer of bondage. The rituals are, in fact, known as *homos merid*, which means, 'compensation for blood'. But let me say, first, that in most cases of homicide the culprit and his family will try to escape revenge by flight. They will seek refuge in another hill and with another clan. Their hosts would protect them if their pursuers sought them out in their sanctuary; their hosts, besides, would act as self-appointed intermediaries and undertake to negotiate for a peaceful settlement. A first method is that of offering blood money, called *homos*, and calculated at twenty head of cattle. If the offer is accepted, and the blood money delivered, the two warring kinship groups must meet for the purification rite which is to remove the eating avoidance and the curse of leprosy. The ritual resembles closely that described in Mesakin. The blood money goes to the mother-brother (or sister-son) of the victim, who must not kill and eat these animals from the enemy clan, not even drink of the cows' milk, until the sacrifice has been duly performed. Recently a Korongo man discovered on himself traces of leprosy; the people at once connected the illness with the fact that, many years ago, his mother-brother had drunk from cows delivered in blood money and payment without waiting for the purification rite.

Other alternatives to revenge, said to have been practised frequently, were compensation by means of an exchange of persons, or voluntary bondage. The former was applicable only if the victim had been a woman. A sister or sister-daughter of the culprit, of the same age as the woman who had been killed, would be surrendered to the mother-brother of the victim, who would adopt her into his family and clan. If the victim had been married, her husband would not benefit from this exchange, at least not directly. The exchanged woman would not become his wife as a matter of course; the widower could request her in marriage (without bride-price); but, if she were young, the mother-brother might prefer to marry her to some other man, for a full bride-price.

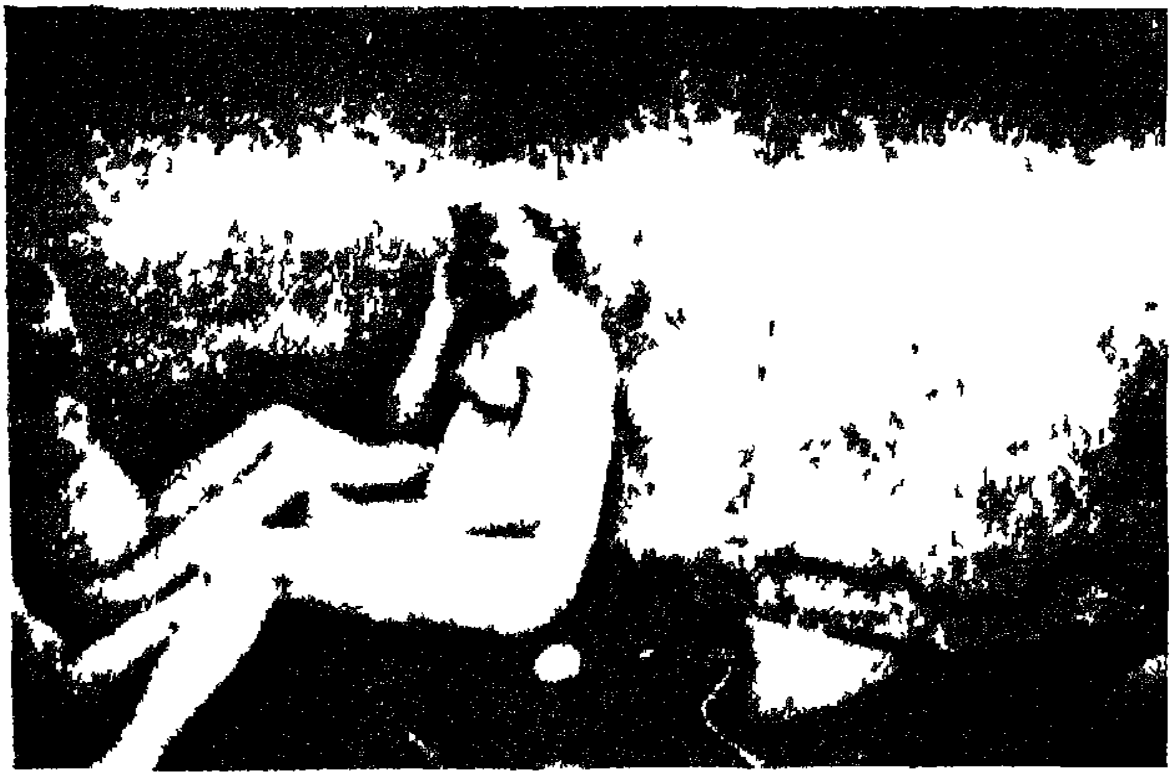
Finally, if the victim had been a man, the homicide or one of his full brothers could place himself in voluntary bondage to the family of the killed: he would agree to devote his whole property and labour, till he died, to the maintenance of the widow or children of the man for whose death he was responsible.

Blood money, compensation, or bondage might all be rejected by the relations of the victim. They might return the cattle offered them, in native parlance, 'refuse to drink milk from the cows', and insist on revenge. The fugitives would, in this case, stay in exile. Again, the blood feud is never allowed to lapse, and may be carried on, undecided, for generations, though all the circumstances of the original crime might be forgotten. The mother-brother of one of my young informants, a man of the Masi clan who had lived in Digodo, had killed another man of the same community—my informant did no longer know his clan—and fled to

KORONGO HILLS THE VILLAGE TABANY

MISAKIN HILLS THE VILLAGE DZARI

YOUNG MEN OF KORONGO MARCHING TO WRESTLING TOURNAMENT
THE WRESTLERS HAVE SMEARED THEIR BODIES ALL OVER WITH
ASHES, AND WEAR THEIR BELTS AND FIGHTING DRESS



MENAKIN GIRLS WHO HAVE ENTERED THE GRANARY' (*see p* 294)

Dimodiru, where he found shelter with his sister's husband. Attempts at revenge never succeeded, and the offer of blood money was invariably rejected. Thus the fugitive remained living there, and was later joined by his wife and children. The blood feud is now in the second generation; the sister-children of the homicide are still afraid to visit Digodo, lest the revenge find them—or, rather, were afraid till very recently. For one of the sister-sons is now a province policeman, who cannot of course avoid visiting the village, and his courageous example has convinced the rest of his family that, under the *Hakuma*, blood feuds do die.

The examples which I have quoted have already shown that Korongo and Mesakin make no distinction between intentional and accidental killing. What alone counts is the loss of a life to kinship group and clan, and their claim to retribution. In Korongo severe injuries provoke blood feud and revenge on a minor scale, aiming merely at punishing the assailant with similar (but not strictly so) injuries.

Oaths and Ordeals. Korongo and Mesakin know of no ordeals to prove guilt or innocence, nor of any traditional oaths. The Korongo sometimes consult their medicine-men (*muse*) in order to discover an unknown thief: the medicine-man would divine the culprit by peering into a gourd filled with oil. But this divination is considered far from infallible. Greed or a personal grudge are said often to lead the diviner astray. A man told me the story of a lost sheep which, according to the *muse* whom he consulted, had been stolen by So-and-so: he examined the herds of the alleged thief, but could not discover the animal. Later it was found dead, killed by a leopard. 'Perhaps', the informant added, 'the *muse* was angry with that man and so accused him of theft.'

In Mesakin witchcraft constitutes a magic retaliation which, in ordeal fashion, punishes the guilty, but leaves the innocent unharmed.

Witchcraft. The Korongo have no witchcraft beliefs. But they conceive of a certain magic power of similar deadly and obscure agency. Little positive can be said about it. It is called *digidom*. It is certainly owned by grain priests, and possibly also by other individuals (no one is quite certain). It is used against evil-doers who, themselves possessing similar magic, try to interfere with fertility and fertility rites, and possibly also against other manners of persons, guilty or innocent. Only one thing emerges as certain from these vague data: that this magic is used, with deadly effect, by grain priests against each other or their own kin. When the younger brother of old Attash, the grain priest of Dimodongo, died, everyone knew that Attash had killed him with his *digidom*—'because of anger'. Whether there had been any other, weightier, reason besides, the people did not know. In this as in all similar cases no action is ever taken. This act of killing cannot be thought of in terms of revenge, expiation, or sanctions (human or supernatural).

This seems logical, since the *digidom* magic, though deadly on occasion, is not in itself malevolent. Its destructive faculties are only one aspect of a magic power of much wider application, creative and beneficial in essence, and

concerned with fertility. Indeed, the people believe (though somewhat vaguely) that the fatal effects are merely designed to protect the magic itself and its efficacy—for example, in conflicts between its human exponents.

In Mesakin we find witchcraft in its fullest sense: malevolent, and single-mindedly bent on death and destruction. Its efficacy, however, is restricted by cause and object. It is called *torogo*.[1] It is non-hereditary; it appears mysteriously, and fully-fledged, in individuals, more often in men than in women (all the cases which I recorded were of men). Witches cannot be recognized by ordinary humans—only by medicine-men (who can tell witches by looking at their faces), and persons who are themselves witches; but witches will make themselves known by their deeds, which medicine-men, and often the people at large, will identify as the work of witchcraft. There is no need for repeated evidence of these sinister gifts: one act is considered convincing proof. The varied nature of witchcraft will best be illustrated by concrete examples.

A man whose little boy was mauled by a leopard accused his brother of having summoned the animal by witchcraft; he later went and killed his brother. Recently a woman whose boy was ailing consulted a medicine-woman, who accused the boy's mother-brother of having caused the illness by means of witchcraft. Brother and sister quarrelled, and he beat and slightly injured her with a stick. The woman fell ill, much more severely than seemed warranted by the injury, and the people began again to talk of witchcraft. The case was taken to the court, and the chief sentenced the alleged sorcerer to three months in prison. Another recent case concerned twin brothers, one of whom was killed by lightning. The people were saying that this was the work of witchcraft, and accused a classificatory brother of the twins. At the funeral ceremony, the surviving twin, incited by public opinion, ran his spear through the alleged witch, who was sitting unconcernedly beside him on the same bench.

Witchcraft thus takes many forms, and I am not certain that I have catalogued them all. As our examples show, it is always practised against relations. It has, in fact, no power outside the circle of close relatives belonging to the same clan—full brothers, mother-brothers, and sister-sons. Nor is it effective unless it has the meaning of retaliation. The tort upon which it must follow is of a very specific kind: it is either unjust treatment over inheritance, or the refusal, by a mother-brother, of that gift of cows claimed by sister-sons on their 'coming of age'. The revenge by witchcraft need not be directed against the one individual responsible for the tort. It may be planned to hurt indirectly, for example, by attacking the child of guilty parents; or the act of witchcraft may spring from a vague jealousy, or a sudden fury, directed at random against

[1] The same name is also given to the magic of medicine-men or -women, who are themselves known as *porogo*. I cannot go here in more detail into the psychological and factual relations of witchcraft and healing magic. Suffice to say that the two are essentially different, although the latter is important for the diagnosis of the former, and some medicine-men are also reputed to be witches. But the majority of 'witches' are men, and of medicine experts, women.

relatives. Thus the motives of the deed are not always on the surface, and may be undiscoverable for the outsider: in the case just mentioned no one seemed to know why the classificatory brother should have bewitched one of the twins. At the same time, other motives for witchcraft are firmly denied: when I suggested anger over theft or insults, I was laughed out of court.

We noted, too, that the attacks of witchcraft provoke retaliation and revenge, notwithstanding the fact that revenge in this case must mean the gravest of crimes—fratricide.

Intertribal Relations. We have seen how the network of clans and kinship links tended, in Korongo, to carry the conception of group law beyond the boundaries of the single community. How far this tendency was also typical of the relations between the sister communities Korongo and Mesakin (as was maintained by some informants) I cannot say. In no case did it lead to consciously formulated intertribal pacts or to the acceptance of areas covered by 'international' law.

A machinery for intergroup relations, however, existed. It was entrusted to intermediaries and tribal ambassadors of the Chief-of-the-Path kind. They were called *bareda* in Mesakin, and *egwar* or *abahir* in Korongo. Unlike the Chiefs-of-the-Path of previous chapters, these men were not office-holders, appointed *ad hoc* on a ritual or other qualification (e.g. familiarity with an enemy tribe and its language). They were powerful, wealthy men, the leaders of their community, and they fulfilled the tasks of their office through the sway which they held over their fellow tribesmen. They were ambassadors and—in a loose sense—chiefs in one.

Chieftainship

The connexion of this office with power, especially in the economic sense, is visible in the nomenclature. The Korongo term *abahir* means strong (in the physical sense), and *egwar*, rich; the Mesakin word *bareda* implies strength, authority, wealth: the Mesakin used to call British officials *bareda*. The Korongo still refer to their new Government chiefs as *egwar*, and the Mesakin as *bareda*.

In Korongo actual power seems to have outweighed all other considerations. The office was in some measure hereditary, but only because, and in so far, wealth was hereditary. Like the latter (or its most important part—livestock), it went from brother to brother or from mother-brother to sister-son. If the affiliation did not mean wealth as well, it held no title to succession. The people would acclaim as *egwar* only a person (man or woman) who held power in the most concrete form: who owned large herds of cattle and slaves, belonged to a kinship group enlarged by many adoptions, and who, through the promise of economic benefits, had the command of numerous men and families. Energy and initiative were self-evident attributes of the 'strong man', as indeed of any man who could amass and preserve such wealth.

When Afegeda died, who had been *egwar* in Dimodongo, and left

little wealth to his brother and sister-sons, his position fell to a certain Atumalagwende, who was no relation of his. The latter happened to be grain priest and rain-maker as well—a purely accidental accumulation of offices which dissolved again after his death. For when he died, his brother succeeded him to his ritual offices, but failed to become *egwar*. This brother was a niggardly fellow: when people visited him in his house, 'he offered them neither beer nor meat'. This was not wealth as the Korongo understood it. In consequence, they refused to recognize him as *egwar*, and transferred their allegiance to his sister Kosse. She was wealthy, generous, and clever: she was 'as good as any man'. In Tabany there had been a dynasty of 'chiefs' for two generations: a first *egwar* (the first the people can remember) was succeeded by his full brother, and the latter by his sister-son, a man called Alore. When Alore died, the people made his brother, Tawer, *egwar*. But the cattle which Tawer had inherited died of an epidemic; he was left a poor man, and his influence was accordingly small. Besides, he was lazy and, the people thought, a coward: he did not visit the enemy groups as he ought, and failed to secure any settlement.[1] The people therefore decided to have another *egwar*; a woman, energetic and wealthy, competed for the position, but she was considered 'not strong enough', and a man, a certain Anur, was elected. This was already in Government times, and the preference for the man may already have reflected the slightly changed conception of 'strength' under the new régime.

Before the advent of the Government, there were four *egwar* in Korongo: one each in Angolo, Dar, Dimodongo, and Tabany. Two belonged to the same clan, the others to different clans. With non-hereditary chieftainship, this distribution of clans was purely accidental and in no way permanent. Nor did the office of the *egwar* bear on that aspect of social life where clan interests were dominant—the settlement of internal disputes or blood feuds in the community. Nor yet was the *egwar* a leader in war or an organizer of raids. His office was exclusively that of an intertribal 'ambassador'. The four Korongo *egwar* had not each a separate sphere, a special enemy group, to which they were 'accredited'. Each *egwar* could treat with any enemy group: Mesakin, Arabs, Talodi people, or other Korongo communities. Often the *egwar* would make use of a man in his community who spoke the other language—an ex-slave, for example—as an interpreter and companion on his errands.

The visits to the enemy group for the negotiation of ransom were no more important than the protection which the *egwar* afforded to visitors to his hill from the enemy group. For many of these visitors came for the purpose of trade: Talodi women selling pots; Arabs, anxious to barter iron, spears, and axe-heads for grain and simsim; Moro, bartering tobacco for goats. The traders would go straight to the house of the *egwar*, knowing that there they would find sanctuary. The institution of the

[1] His predecessor, Alore, had been killed while 'on duty': on a visit to Mesakin, he had been stabbed by a Mesakin man and later died of the wound.

egwar thus created another 'enclave of peace', of economic significance. It appears entrusted with the far-sighted policy of fostering trade for the benefit, but against the short-sighted impulses of the community, which were to kill and rob the strangers. The need of great, concrete power is thus explained. But sometimes the *egwar* himself betrayed the trust: once a father and daughter from Angolo came to Tabany and stayed with the then *egwar*, Alore. When they left he accompanied them as far as the boundary of the village to make sure they went away in safety. Suddenly, it appears, he changed his mind and, remembering that the Angolo people had kidnapped a Tabany girl, he snatched his girl-guest away and held her for ransom.

The tendency in Mesakin was to make the office of *bareda* hereditary irrespective of wealth. The third of a dynasty of 'chiefs' in Tozari (all mother-brothers and sister-sons), a certain Kula, held the office in spite of his poverty; and a young sister-son of one of the late *bareda*, again a poor man (and holding no official position), is still regarded by the people of his community as the rightful *bareda*. The power and influence essential to the office were derived from other sources—namely, from the hereditary link with the largest clans of the tribe, and also from a more easily workable division of duties.

At the time of the British occupation five *bareda* dynasties existed side by side in Tozari and the small hill communities in the eastern Mesakin hills. Three dynasties came from the same community, Tozari; each represented a different, large clan. Small clans, I was informed, never produced 'chiefs'. The *bareda*, then, were neither clan heads, nor yet fully local heads. Their association with the large clans charged them, in some measure, with the dominant interests of the group, which were clan interests. Unlike their Korongo brothers-in-office, the Mesakin *bareda* assumed a slight share in the control of communal life: they would help a man to recover stolen property, and they might intervene—different *bareda* co-operating—in negotiations for blood-money settlements. But their main task remained their ambassadorship with its twofold duty of treating with the enemy and protecting strangers. The different *bareda* were 'accredited' to different groups: one to the Korongo of the north chain; two others to the Korongo of Dar and Angolo, respectively; a fourth to Talodi; and a fifth to the Arabs in the west and the people of Shatt.

It is curious that these two sister groups should have evolved different elements of chieftainship: Korongo the element of territorial sovereignty, and Mesakin of hereditary rule. But both are, in their fashion, equally remote from the full realization of chieftainship, which is the conscious, centralized control of group life.

Modern Law and Administration

The present paramount chief[1] of Korongo is a son of the late *egwar* of

[1] This description is not quite exact: he is chief of the north chain and president of the Native Court at the same time.

Tabany, Alore. This oblique relationship (in a matrilineal society) represents the only link between past and present political organization. None of the *bareda* of Mesakin was willing to come forward and take office under the Government. The first Government chief of the tribe was a certain Gyabre, of a large clan whose main qualification was that, having been a slave of the Arabs, he could speak Arabic and knew Arab ways. The second chief, Smayn, came from a different, again large, clan. The present man is the third Government chief of Mesakin, a distant relation of the second (a great-grandson of his sister), under whom he served for some time as sub-chief.

The Korongo administration is embodied in three chiefs, or *Meks*, each ruling over a hill community (the north chain counting as a single community). Each *Mek* is assisted by a number of *Sheikhs* appointed for various villages in the community. North Korongo, with sixteen villages, has ten *Sheikhs* (and a number of *Wakils*). In this number Buram, the Mesakin community which is politically under Korongo, is not included.[1]

The majority of *Sheikhs* were chosen by the villages for their 'understanding of the ways of the Government'. All of them speak Arabic; one had been a corporal in the police; another comes from a half-Arab family. Only one of them also holds a traditional (religious) tribal office—that of a grain priest.

The present *Mek* of North Korongo is only the second Government chief. His predecessor had been the *egwar* Anur of whom we have spoken before. He had been an ex-slave in Talodi, and to this past he owed his reputation of 'knowing the ways of the Government'. His knowledge was rather one-sided, for after some years in office he was deposed for embezzlement and the levying of illegal tribute.

The *Mek* resides in Dimodongo, and acts as president of the Native Court, which is composed of all the chiefs and sub-chiefs of the tribe and meets weekly, on market day. The Korongo built themselves an impressive court-house. A barrier, running across the width of the long, square hut, separates the court in session from the waiting litigants, witnesses, or onlookers. There is a dais for the court members, arm-chairs, built in the mudwalls, for the three *Meks*, benches for the sub-chiefs, and little clay stools in front of the court benches for witnesses and litigants. The court clerk sits facing the president; tribal police summon the parties to the presence of the court and stand at the door relieving them, as they enter, of their weapons.

These neat, well-planned arrangements are belied by the court proceedings. There is little conscious procedure. The court sessions are confused, without plan or order. Always there will be several people talking simultaneously. Chiefs and sub-chiefs converse together or shout at each other across the room. Parties left sitting from a previous case

[1] My material for this section refers largely to Korongo; and, in Korongo, to the northern community.

will heartily join in the next, though it concerns them not at all. The audience overflows into the court chamber, and the court chamber invites the co-operation of the audience. Constantly side-tracked, and side-tracking each other, in impromptu arguments, plaintiffs, defendants, and judges seem parties, not to a planful legal investigation, but to a disturbed and often indecisive controversy.

These are not merely externals. They reflect an uncertainty inherent in the whole attitude of the people towards judicial decisions. This attitude is still in large measure dominated by the traditional conception of legal actions, as decentralized, group-to-group settlements of disputes. The very large number of *Sheikhs* and *Wakils* who sit on the court shows the desire of even small localities to be represented. The families of litigants invariably turn up in a body to take part in the discussions—as they would take part in the quarrels or fights of their individual members. Often the negotiations are carried on between the opposing groups rather than through court and chief, and the court members act, not as impartial judges, but as partisans, tied to plaintiff or defendant by clan or kinship. Thus the proceedings often end in a stalemate which the president's vote is unable to solve.

At the same time, we find proof of a remarkable grasp of legal and judicial principles. In adultery cases, for example, in which enraged husbands have seriously injured the paramour, the tribal medicine-man who treated the unlucky philanderer would be called by the court as a medical expert to testify to the nature of the injury. We shall also meet with evidence of strikingly adequate adjustments of traditional measures to modern conditions. To speak here of 'transition' and 'growing pains' may seem commonplace; but it seems the only appropriate description. However, we can study these symptoms of transition more closely. This is the tribal code as it is applied to-day by the Native Court.

Theft presents no problem of adjustment. Whether committed in the group or between different groups, it is so unanimously considered a crime that public opinion is not only fully behind the modern prosecution, but even welcomes its greater efficiency. But to-day cases involving property claims of a different order are also taken to court, such as disputes over inheritance or certain traditional gifts and obligations, and here the moral issues are less certain. Take the following case:

When a certain Akuyis performed the funeral feast for a sister-child, all his relatives contributed gifts of bulls. Among them was his blood brother and friend Tiwengi. Now, the rule is that, while gifts of relations are accepted without making a return gift, counter-gifts (of slightly smaller value than the original gift) are necessary in the case of friends. Accordingly, Akuyis presented Tiwengi with a female calf. The calf grew into a cow, and later had seven young. All this happened years ago. When Akuyis' classificatory grandson (sister's daughter's son) 'came of age', he went to Tiwengi and demanded the seven young, on the grounds that they had not been included in the original gift. By this indirect

method the young man intended to claim his 'anticipated inheritance'. His grandfather disapproved of this step, saying that it was bound to make his friend angry. The latter, to show that he still cared for Akuyis, offered the young man a bull and a cow, maintaining, however, that Akuyis' grandson had no legal right to this gift.[1] The young man was satisfied at first; but when later the cow calved, and the young died, he accused Tiwengi of having tricked him and given him a bad cow. He returned the animal, and renewed his original demand for the seven animals. Curiously enough, he was now supported by his grandfather, and also by the local *Sheikh*, who belonged to the same clan. Tiwengi was furious, and refused point blank. In this state the case came before the court. After several heated sessions, the *Mek* ordered Tiwengi to replace the 'bad' cow with another animal. Some *Sheikhs* agreed with the *Mek*, while others sided with Tiwengi. The latter left the court declaring (as he had done twice before) that he would not obey, and would appeal to the District Commissioner if the chief tried to enforce the order.

Matrimonial disputes constitute the majority of all court cases. We have already spoken of the modern regulation of adultery and divorce. The Korongo have, within rational limits, legalized the old principle of self-help; for they permit as legitimate the spontaneous assault upon a paramour whom the husband catches *in flagrante delicto*. Unlike this retaliation in the first anger, subsequent, premeditated assaults are punishable (with fines up to £1).

In homicide, the official punishment has fully replaced the blood feud. The culprit's family no longer flees from the hill to escape collective revenge. Blood money, formerly an alternative of revenge, is now demanded in every case—that is, in addition to the retribution. This seems to explain why blood money is so much lower now than of old; in the two cases which I recorded it amounted to four cows. The purification sacrifice must still be performed by the groups concerned; but unlike the Moro, the Korongo do not think it essential to include the culprit in prison in this rite.

The distinction between homicide in the clan and kinship group and homicide between different groups has disappeared. Intentional and accidental killing are still regarded as identical crimes. Severe bodily injuries, which formerly entailed revenge, now entail fines and damages. In a concrete case the culprit was made to pay six 'real' (120 piastres), five as fine and one as indemnity to the injured person. In light injuries no indemnity is granted, and it is in cases of this kind that the expert opinion of the medicine-man becomes important.

What we have said about modern jurisdiction in Korongo largely applies also to Mesakin. But here blood feuds and the urge of revenge are more persistent. In 1924–5 a man who was carrying on a blood feud to avenge the killing of his mother-brother failed in his first attempt, merely

[1] In the purchase (or other exchange) of cows, the calves born after the transaction belong to the buyer.

wounding his enemy. He was taken before the District Commissioner (Native Courts had not yet been established), who tried to persuade him to accept blood money instead of pursuing the feud. The family against which he waged the feud sent him five cows, but he drove the animals away, and was not satisfied till he had killed his quarry. He was later hanged. We remember the case of the twins, which happened quite recently. There, too, the murderer was hanged, and he knew very well what fate awaited him. The *Mek* told me that the murderer made no attempt to hide or escape. He faced the eventual punishment with equanimity. Questioned, he would always reply: 'When my brother was killed, I could not eat or drink. I was so unhappy. Since the day when I killed the murderer I am again happy.' Witchcraft accusations, as we have seen, are to-day the concern of the Native Court, and lead to prison sentences.

To these crimes and offences we must add the many small, petty cases which are now taken to court, but which, formerly, would never have gone beyond the family circle. Take the case of a jealous wife who always quarrelled with her co-wife, and finally beat her severely with a stick; her victim, who was pregnant and thus doubly furious, rushed straight to the court to bring her accusation.

The following case is even more significant, as it led to one of the stalemates mentioned before. It came before the Korongo court, at a session which I attended. Two small girls had gone to fetch water; one was singing. She had sticking-out front teeth, and sang badly, apparently. The other girl teased her, and the girls came to blows. As one girl was bigger than the other, the latter's elder sister joined in to set the balance right. Whereupon mothers, mother-sisters, and young brothers all joined in. The brawl came to a temporary stop, but the same evening the sister and mother of the girl who had been abused went to the other girl's house, armed with heavy sticks, and resumed the fight, in which one woman was injured by a blow on her foot. Eventually the men separated their womenfolk. The woman who had been hurt took the case to court. The entire families turned up, without, however, the girls' mother-brothers, who had declined to come. The fathers, who did come, were not, of course, from kinship point of view in a position of authority. The case was threshed out for over an hour with astonishing seriousness as well as anger and vituperation, on both sides. It was impossible to reach an agreement, each side insisting on having the other punished. The main grievance of the women was that their menfolk had not taken up the fight on their wives' and sisters' behalf, as good men would. Eventually I grew impatient, for there were more, and important, cases on the list, and suggested that the fathers and mother-brothers ought to have spanked the girls instead of making a case of it. One or two *Sheikhs* took my view, the rest openly disagreed. One of the men who sided with me had, unfortunately, rather dubious credentials, having been in the employment of the local mission for some years. When he supported

me, an old woman (in fact, his own sister) accused him of having 'forgotten proper behaviour' in his long association with missionaries. Eventually (under my influence, I must admit), the chief confiscated the stick with which the critical assault had been delivered, and dismissed the case, with the warning that, if there were more fighting, he would impose fines all round. Now, the confiscation of the stick went down well and was hailed as a Solomonic judgement. But the dismissal was a failure. At the next court session, and the one after that, the same case was again brought up. Indeed, some *Sheikhs* spoke to the District Commissioner about my unwarranted attempts to short-circuit the course of justice.

We can now, I believe, lay our fingers on the weakness of the judicial system of Korongo. It does not lie in a failing conception of the legislative principles: the people have evolved new laws and adjusted old ones consciously and, on the whole, with success. Nor is it a failure to appreciate the judicial machinery. On the contrary, cases of all manner and descriptions are now taken to court as a matter of course. Here lies partly the weakness. For the greatly widened orbit of the law has now come to embrace minor cases, petty disputes, in which the general moral issues are not self-evident, or indeed discoverable. In disputes in which there are rights and wrongs of the case, unmistakably reflecting public opinion or the principles of solid institutions (marriage, property, blood feud), the new courts and their laws function well. In disputes over issues too small or transitory to be noted in the moral tenets of the society, the courts are at sea. It seems significant that in the women's quarrel just mentioned the mother-brothers, the exponents of kinship authority, refused to concern themselves with the case.

In these petty disputes, then, private interests alone come into play, and the balance between the opposing claims is difficult to achieve. Under traditional conditions the balance would have been purely physical, determined by the relative strength of individuals or families. To-day it needs the moral weight of an impartial arbiter, sufficiently sure of himself to enforce his decision. The court members cannot supply this moral weight. They remain too much representatives of the group segments and their particular interests. 'Representation', advisable in other tribes, is a source of weakness in this fluid society where the segments hardly coalesce to a wider, embracing unit. The chief fails similarly. Not, I believe, for personal inadequacies, but rather because he and his society fail to comprehend the pivotal function of his office.

The following seems convincing evidence. As said before, the Korongo have no traditional ordeals or sacred implements on which to take the oath. Lately the Arab *kitab* has come to be used for this purpose in court proceedings. But while in most tribes the chief would acquire a *kitab* of his own, the Korongo chief has nothing of the kind and has to borrow the charm every time it is needed in court—either from someone among the people present who happens to have one, or from one of the Arab merchants in the near-by market. One or two *Sheikhs* of advanced views have

been pointing out to the chief for some time that it was feasible to have a special court *kitab*. But the chief himself and his other advisers could not see the use of this, ignoring in the symbols of the law as in actual jurisdiction that conception of a pivotal, impartial authority.[1]

Conclusion

The close affinity of the two cultures is broken by one element—the obsession with witchcraft in Mesakin, which has no parallel in Korongo. With this crucial divergence certain other tribal characteristics are linked, like the crimes of violence which, in Mesakin, so often spring from the fear of witchcraft. But we discover also differences of a more subtle nature, belonging less to culture in the narrow sense than to the imponderables of temperament and disposition. Any visitor to the two tribes must notice the friendliness and cheerful temper of the Korongo, and the dour, reserved, and suspicious attitude of the Mesakin. This contrast is noticeable, not only in the intercourse with us, the strangers, but equally in the intercourse of the two groups among themselves.[2] Let me give an example: In Korongo the people are strikingly sociable; they constantly forgather in cheerful groups, talking and joking together. A sight like this is rare in Mesakin country. There the individuals seem self-centred, they keep to themselves and shun these friendly, informal contacts. The deep suspicion, the gloom and unhappiness which pervade the everyday life and contacts of this tribe flow, I believe, from the same source—the obsession with the threat of witchcraft.

Our gauge of emotional stability, suicide, fits into this picture. Once more it bears out the pessimistic, neurotic mentality of the Mesakin. In Korongo informants absolutely denied the occurrence of suicide, of which indeed I found no evidence. In Mesakin the spontaneous reply was: 'There are plenty of cases.' I recorded only four—all typical instances of 'escape', reflecting a mentality which cannot withstand misfortune and frustration and (in two cases of four) the ever-present shadow of witchcraft.

An old chief (*bareda*) stabbed himself because he had lost all his wealth. A man, long angry and unhappy, killed himself with his spear because his brothers and sisters had all died in rapid succession and people believed that he, through witchcraft, had caused their deaths. Another man killed himself from unhappiness over his brother's apparently incurable illness (though the brother later recovered). An old man,

[1] While writing this description of the Korongo courts (April 1941), I learned that the chief has been deposed for embezzlement and the courts suspended on the grounds that they functioned unsatisfactorily. My description, first compiled in an Interim Report, refers to the situation as I found it exactly a year previously.

[2] If the reserve and suspicion of the Mesakin were restricted to their intercourse with us, this might be explained by the fact that the Mesakin, unlike the Korongo, had to suffer punitive police action. This experience may have contributed to their 'natural' dourness. But the fact that it did so (while in other Nuba tribes punitive patrols had no such lasting effect) would itself be evidence of the more deeply rooted psychological trait.

finally, cracked his own skull with a spade: he had refused the customary gift of a cow to his sister-son; the latter, fully supported by public opinion, seized the animal by force; mad with fury and shame and, perhaps, afraid of the familiar revenge through witchcraft, the old man ended his life.

The pivotal divergence itself, the occurrence of witchcraft in one of two tribes so closely alike in other respects, I am unable to explain—save by some deep-seated and not further reducible psychological bent. The environment of the two tribes is the same; nor are there any divergences in the social and economic field which would throw light on this striking diversity. True, Mesakin witchcraft is conspicuously correlated with the greater insistence, in this tribe, on the 'anticipated inheritance' of young men; witchcraft appears, as we remember, as a sanction of this economic obligation. Whether we can accept the urge of this economic demand as a motive in its own right, strong enough to call forth the witchcraft beliefs, or whether its sinister seriousness is but an expression of a suspicious, fear-ridden mentality, is a question that hardly needs an answer.

CHAPTER IX

TULLISHI

People and Country

JEBEL TULLISHI is one of the scattered hills which form the western boundary of Nuba country. Rising steeply from the plain, it is the highest among these hills and mountains. Of its wide plateau, only the northern edge is inhabited. Its population, though the largest in this area, is still small compared with the other Nuba tribes which we have studied, numbering about 3,500 souls (a little under 700 tax-payers).[1]

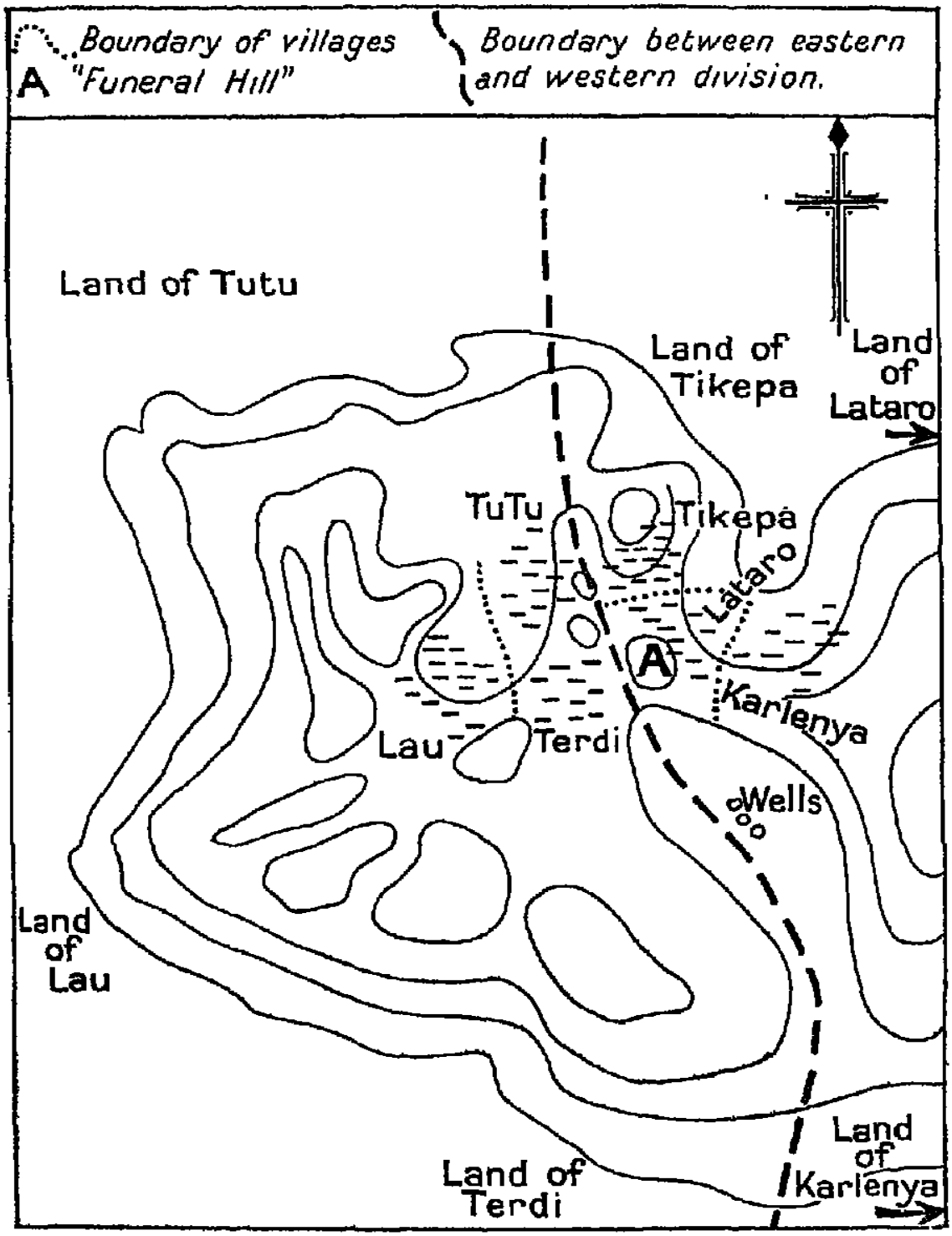
The Tullishi people assert, with the rigidity of a dogma, that they have 'always' lived in their hills, unaffected by immigrations. Indeed, culturally, they are almost isolated. They differ fundamentally in language and culture from most of the surrounding hill tribes—Tima, Tabak, Daju, or, a little further away, Gulud and Katla. Only Kamdang, a small hill community some ten miles to the south-east, shares with Tullishi its language and partly its culture and social organization; most of the clan names are identical in the two tribes. Tullishi is similarly related to a very small group of people who call themselves Truj and represent the aboriginal *inhabitants of the low, rocky chain of Dar el Kibira, now occupied by a* section of the Daju tribe. To-day, the Truj live side by side, and politically under, the Daju, and are rapidly losing their tribal identity. The Tullishi people are fully aware of this affinity with Kamdang and Truj, but have no traditions of origin or past migrations which might attempt to explain this tribal kinship.

They have such traditions with regard to the people of Miri (as also of Jebel Damik and Keiga), with whom they again claim a common, or closely similar, language, and common clans. Formerly, the tradition runs, the two tribes lived close together, 'like brothers'. A man from Tullishi and a man from Miri were in the habit of collecting honey from the same hollow tree in alternate years. But one day the Miri man, dissatisfied with this arrangement, cut down the tree. The Tullishi man grew angry and said: 'As you have cut down the tree, so our clans shall be cut.' From that day the clans, though still the same by name, acknowledged no relationship, and the two groups lived as separate tribes. The Miri people, we may add, share the tradition of the ancient kinship of the two tribes, though they frame it in a different legend, attributing the subsequent split to a different cause. But this belief in a common language and culture is not borne out by fact: beyond a few similarities in their vocabulary and the occurrence of two Tullishi clan names in Miri, there is little to connect the two groups. The explanation seems

[1] The vernacular name of the hill is Tulishi or Tulisi. The people call themselves, collectively, Gatulishi. The singular is Datulishi (m.) or Mdatulishi (f.).

to be that these affinities linked Tullishi with an older, aboriginal, population of Miri which has been largely overlaid by a later, immigrant culture. There exists evidence of this stratification in Miri, and the two common clan names may well refer to remnants of the original population.

TULLISHI HILL



Tullishi language bears a rather surprising similarity to the language of far-off Korongo. It refers mainly to expressions belonging to the context of social and religious organization. Neither tribe is aware of this relationship.

Tullishi and Kamdang, neighbours as well as cultural relations, have since old times maintained close contacts. They did not, however, practise intermarriage, except once—of a somewhat one-sided kind, when, during a famine, women and girls from Tullishi wandered into Kamdang to beg grain; the Kamdang men kidnapped them and made them their wives without paying bride-price. To-day the two tribes visit each other frequently, attend each other's feasts and ceremonies, and also intermarry. Five Tullishi men have taken wives from Kamdang, and recently two men from Tullishi have settled in Kamdang and married there. At the same time, the two tribes have also grown apart: for Kamdang has come more strongly under the influence of the Daju people and, through them, of Mohammedan culture.[1]

Tullishi and Truj maintain few contacts and do not intermarry; 'It is too far', the people say. The truth seems rather that the Tullishi felt no incentive to enter into more intimate relations with this small and poverty-stricken group. In the case of the Miri, who live as far distant, the Tullishi remember their tribal kinship in times of need. During the 'great famine' (of 1880?) large numbers of Tullishi men went to Miri to beg food or find a temporary livelihood. Again four years ago, after two bad years in which locusts had destroyed the crops, ten or twelve men from Tullishi turned to Miri for help. They later returned to their hill, with the exception of two men, who settled in Miri and married local women.

Contacts and intercourse extend also to neighbouring groups with which Tullishi can claim no ties of tribal or cultural affinity. People from Tima, Daju, Katla, and Gulud are frequent visitors in Tullishi and welcome guests at the tribal feasts, and *vice versa*.[2] Co-operation, specially in the economic sphere, is well established. The other tribes barter hoes, spears, and hides for grain and cotton from Tullishi. Tullishi, as I have mentioned in a previous chapter, has adopted the Daju loom and learned the craft of weaving from her neighbours. Many people in Tullishi are bi-lingual, speaking the language of either Daju or Gulud besides their own. These friendly contacts increased with the pacification of the country. But to some extent they are of older standing and co-existed with the universal warfare which characterized inter-tribal relations in pre-British times.[3] One instance is the periodical truce which the Tullishi and Daju used to arrange for the purpose of peaceful marketing (*see* p. 70). Another, the existence in Tullishi of a grain priest practising a magic which his father had learned in Tima, and of two medicine-men who studied their craft in Gulud.

Intermarriage, however, dates from British times. The numerical

[1] Kamdang, for example, has adopted female circumcision from the Daju. The woman expert who performs the operation in Kamdang is Daju-trained.

[2] The friendship with Gulud, which made Tullishi shelter 'fugitives from justice' from Gulud, was one of the reasons for the punitive patrol of 1926.

[3] Stone walls barring every approach to Tullishi still bear witness to the perennial state of alarm in which the people used to live.

evidence as well as the attitude of the people make it clear that it is still an exception: three men married wives from Daju, one a wife from Katla, and two Tullishi women married to Tima. The Tullishi men will quote abundant reasons for their reluctance to intermarry with other tribes. They are not such that their truth can be easily tested: they express and rationalize the repugnance to an alien culture. Thus the Tima women are said to be dirty and indecently clad (an argument hardly convincing to the impartial observer), and the Daju women all infected with syphilis.

Contacts with the Messiriya Arabs of that area were formerly in the nature of unmitigated warfare. To-day they are largely confined to the economic sphere, and still prove a source of friction rather than potential friendship. Arab cattle are damaging the Tullishi crops, and Arab cultivators have repeatedly occupied land cleared and claimed by Tullishi farmers. If a Tullishi man protested, he would be beaten up, and if he demanded legal redress, the Arabs would hedge and delay the settlement till it lost all meaning. The few friendly contacts with the Arabs which have emerged are hardly weighty enough to counterbalance the deep-rooted mistrust and resentment of the people of Tullishi or to prevent a sudden flare-up of revenge.

The various contacts and forms of co-operation with other tribes which we have enumerated hardly ever embrace the people of Tullishi as a whole. They apply only to one or the other of the two local sections into which Tullishi is split: while the west of the hill is friendly with Daju and Tima, the east has ties with Gulud and Katla, and there can be no mingling or overlapping. This rigid dualism which modifies every tribal tie, even the casual contacts of travelling, will engage us presently.

Settlement

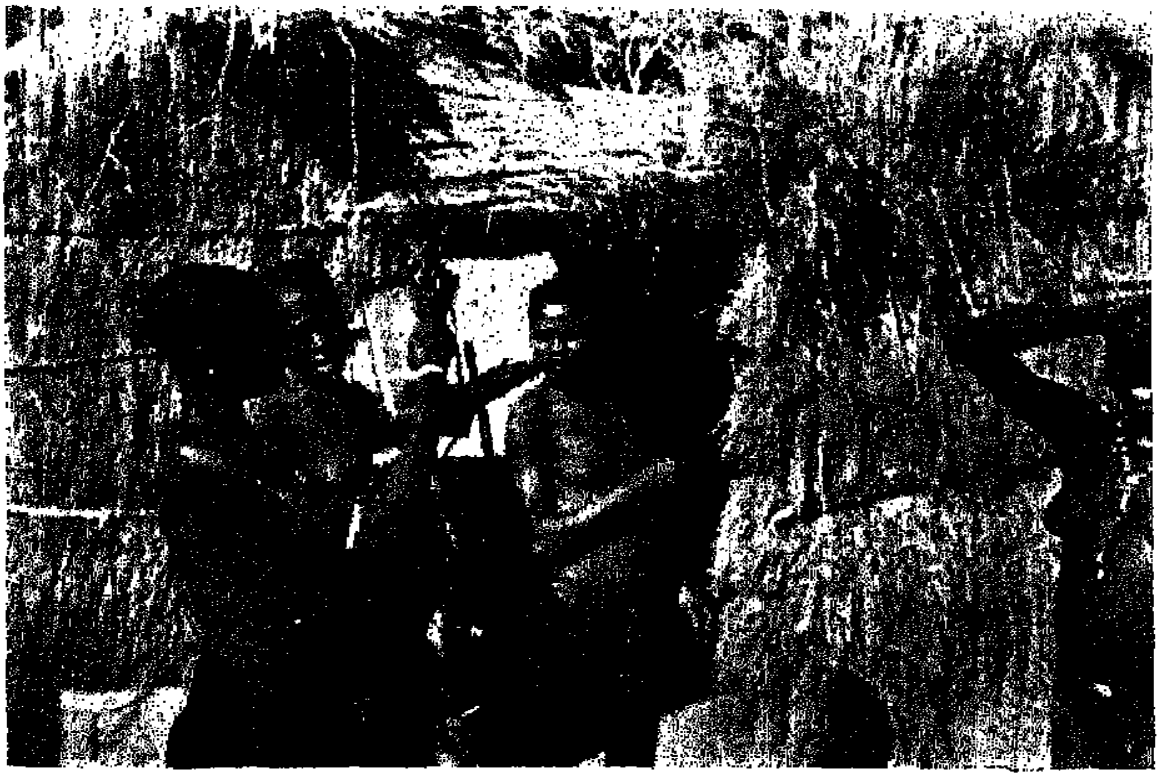
The people of Tullishi live in six crowded villages (*kudi*) which lie close together, separated only by narrow gullies or the low, broken walls of rocks. They describe a rough circle; following it from east to north and down to the west and south, the villages are: Karlenya, Lataro, Tikepa, Tutu, Lau, Terdi. Geographically, then, Tullishi forms a single hill community. Across this ring of villages stretches that invisible boundary which cuts the community in two. It runs roughly north-south, separating Karlenya, Lataro, Tikepa, from Tutu, Lau, and Terdi. The boundary continues beyond the hill massif into the plain, dividing the farm land of the tribe in two large areas, like the axis of a vast circle whose hub is Jebel Tullishi. I have called it an invisible boundary because it follows no physical features, except the summary division into an eastern and western half of the hill. It rests entirely on beliefs and dogmas, and reflects an imaginary universe.[1]

We gain a first glimpse of this universe in the Tullishi myth of origin.

[1] The dual local division has no name. The tribal community as a whole is sometimes referred to as *kudi adeni*,—'the villages' or 'hills all together' (*Kudi* meaning both village and hill).

ILLUSH. THE VILLAGE KARELNYA

ILLUSH. FUNERAL HILL[1] (see p. 324)



TULLISHI WOMEN

CHIEF OF TULLISHI IN THE SACRED ENCLOSURE OF HIS HOUSE:
IN THE BACKGROUND THE MAGIC TREE TRUNK (*see* p. 345)

In the beginning of the world God (*misalli malame*, God of the Sky) planted a gourd on the top of Jebel Tullishi. The gourd grew, ripened, and split open, and a man and woman stepped forth—the ancestors of the Tullishi tribe. They had numerous offspring. One day they quarrelled, no one knows why, and parted company: the man, with some of the children, moved to the eastern side of the hill; the woman, with the remaining children, to the western part. It was an unequal division; for the children who had stayed with their father were strong and many, those who had followed their mother, weak and few. Filled with hatred against each other, the man and the woman forbade their children ever to visit the other side of the hill lest they be bewitched by their other parent.

This, then, is the account of how the dual division of the tribe came into being. Every feature of the myth bears upon a concrete, vital aspect of the social structure. The people will tell you that from these mythical times the population in the eastern half of Tullishi has always been more prolific, and its men strong, brave, and aggressive, while those in the western part—children of a woman—remained weak, more peace-loving, even a little cowardly (as the people of that section would themselves admit). The description fits perfectly. Clearly, the mythical beliefs have strongly conditioned the outlook and temperament of the two groups: they vindicate, too, and continue to vindicate, a certain overbearing behaviour on the part of the 'strong', 'male', eastern section.

But this difference is said to have played no part in the wars against other tribes, in which both sections would prove themselves equally brave. It defines only their mutual relationship, an unequal balance within the social system. We shall presently understand the full import of this.

Children and young men are forbidden to cross the boundary between eastern and western section, which rule applies to the tribal lands in the plain as well as to the area of settlement. To disregard this prohibition means to expose oneself to the danger of witchcraft (*tane*). The fear is deep-rooted. Only at night and in secrecy would the young men dare to trespass.[1] At certain ceremonies—above all, at funeral feasts—when all relations forgather irrespective of locality, the ban is temporarily lifted.[2] But the children and young men would still feel uneasy and walk hurriedly across the forbidden ground. Another rule, besides, upholds the dual

[1] Ignorance of this invisible boundary has several times given rise to frictions between the Administration and the people. During the Tullishi patrol of 1926, for example, an energetic District Commissioner, intent on instilling some discipline into the young men of the tribe, ordered them to appear every morning for a roll call at his camp. As the camp was situated on the territory of the western section, the young men from the eastern villages failed to turn up, which was taken as more evidence of their unruliness. Often, too, when collecting porters, officers found it impossible to recruit young men in the western villages for a trek through the eastern part of the hill, and *vice versa*; again this was attributed to slackness or hostility.

[2] The burial grounds are adjacent to the villages and belong to them.

division: when visiting the other side on such ceremonial occasions, people from the eastern section (old and young, men as well as women) must walk clockwise round a certain hill standing right on the boundary, while people from the western section will walk round it anti-clockwise.

The barrier of the 'invisible boundary' does not concern older men, nor girls and women, who move freely about the hill. They are less afraid of witchcraft, though not immune from it.[1] But the dual division overshadows the whole life of the group. Even apart from it, social life tends towards sharp local separation. At ordinary dances, for instance, you rarely find guests from other villages. And at dances which embrace people from different localities, each local group keeps to itself: they could, in fact, hardly dance together, for most dance songs are known only in the single village where they originated, and have never spread beyond it.

In linking the dual tribal division with the division of the sexes, the myth expresses again a dominant characteristic of the social structure of Tullishi. The split in the mythical family of ancestors, with some children following the father and others the mother; the hatred and jealousy between the man and the woman; the antagonism and fear between the father's and mother's section—all these legendary facts only dramatize, in the fashion of myths, features inherent in the matrilineal kinship organization of the tribe. The tribal dualism is, in fact, nothing but the kinship structure magnified and lifted to the plane of the group organization at large.

It pervades the whole culture of Tullishi, in a strikingly schematic and symmetrical fashion. The custom mentioned above, that one half of the people must walk clockwise and the other half anti-clockwise round 'funeral hill', is a first instance. Another, the method of burying the dead: men are buried so that their heads point east (towards the 'male' division of the hill), women with their heads pointing west. Of the three villages in each section, two are regarded as being more intimately linked—'like brothers'—and the third as standing somewhat aloof. These brother-villages are, in the western section, Tutu and Lau, and in the eastern section, Lataro and Tikepa; the latter are also known by a common name—Kurmedi. The 'single' village in each section is practising circumcision of boys, while circumcision is forbidden in the other villages. No one knows why this should be so; suggestions that divergent origin might be responsible are emphatically denied. The observance of the two villages is conceived of as some magic property; for it is believed that if a man from one of the twin villages were to undergo circumcision, he would die.[2] The 'single' village in the western section is the traditional residence of the hereditary chief, and in the eastern section of a grain priest of

[1] Only the chief and the grain priests of the tribe are immune from witchcraft (*see* p. 346). But they are, as we shall hear, subject to the restrictions of the 'invisible boundary'.

[2] Lately this fear has weakened. Two young men from one of the twin villages who had been abroad returned home circumcised. Proud of the courage they had shown, they were boasting: 'Look at us—we are still alive!'

secondary rank. In each section the twin villages share a grain priest of great influence. Each section also possesses an *abanyora*, or 'king-maker'—the man who organizes the election of a new chief. The grain priest in the eastern section is in many ways the counterpart of the chief in the western section: both have the same paraphernalia of office—a magic iron earring—and their lives stand under similar avoidances, restricting their movements. The two men must never meet, lest they be killed by the deadly magic of their earrings. To avoid this risk, they must never cross into each other's territory, either up on the hill or down in the plain. The chief, in fact, must never travel eastward, or the grain priest westward. When, some years ago, the chief went to El Obeid, he had to travel through Abu Zabad, i.e. going west first, instead of taking the shorter eastern route, over Katla and Dilling. Although their age would exempt them, the chief and grain priest fall under the ban of the invisible boundary. In their persons, then, the dual division of the society is epitomized.

The two sections are associated with the magic control of different natural phenomena affecting crops and fertility: the eastern part owns locust magic, through special locust magicians who reside in the eastern villages;[1] the western section, rain magic. Here the people at large are credited with the power of sending or withholding rain. In the event of a drought affecting only the eastern side of the hill, the people in that part will be convinced that the western villages have 'stolen' the rain, and would combat the magic by actions of violence, as if between enemies. Of all this I shall speak later. Let me only emphasize that this division of the magic control over accidents of Nature—locusts and rain—renders the two segments of the tribe dependent on each other; it is the same interdependence, tinged with antagonism and fear, which is behind the whole dogma of this dual organization.

I must add that the *tabu* of the 'invisible boundary' is relaxed in certain cases. Thus a young man who has many relations in a village on the other side of the hill would visit this particular village (though not the other villages in the forbidden section), unafraid of witchcraft. In the two single villages, Karlenya and Terdi, the mutual fear is less outspoken than in the twin villages in each section, and young men would again think nothing of crossing the boundary. In both cases, then, familiarity, born of kinship or neighbourliness, can overcome the mystic barrier. But this is true only of adolescents nearing adulthood; the superstitious fear remains unmitigated in the case of young boys.

Marriage alone of all the important social institutions of Tullishi is unaffected by the local division. As brides move to their husbands' houses, and young men, when they marry, remain living in the locality where they were born, women rather than men represent the mobile element in this otherwise rigid social system.

[1] To-day a western village, Tutu, also has a locust expert. But his is not a traditional office; the locust expert is the Tima-trained grain priest of whom I have spoken earlier in this chapter.

Homestead

In its layout, the Tullishi house corresponds to a somewhat crude version of the ring-type house of Korongo or Mesakin. The style of the building is much less ambitious and the technique more primitive: the huts, mud-built, with a conical thatch, are low and small. Five to eight such huts, connected by mud walls, are grouped close together in a circle or narrow oval. On sloping ground, the foundations of the huts are levelled by means of rough masonry. The doors are irregularly arranged, though all open towards the enclosed inner space. The main entrance, a low square gate, is let into one of the connecting walls. Often another wall divides the house itself in two parts, a front part, consisting of three to four small huts which serve as granaries and goat-pen, and the back of the house, formed by three more roomy huts: they are the sleeping-hut of the family head, his wife, and their small children; a cooking-hut, in which the girls sleep; and a store-hut, filled with pots and tools. The inner 'courtyard' is covered with a conical grass roof, the front 'courtyard' with a loose structure of timber and branches of trees. If a man has several wives, each co-wife will have a separate sleeping-hut, which is added to the cluster of huts.

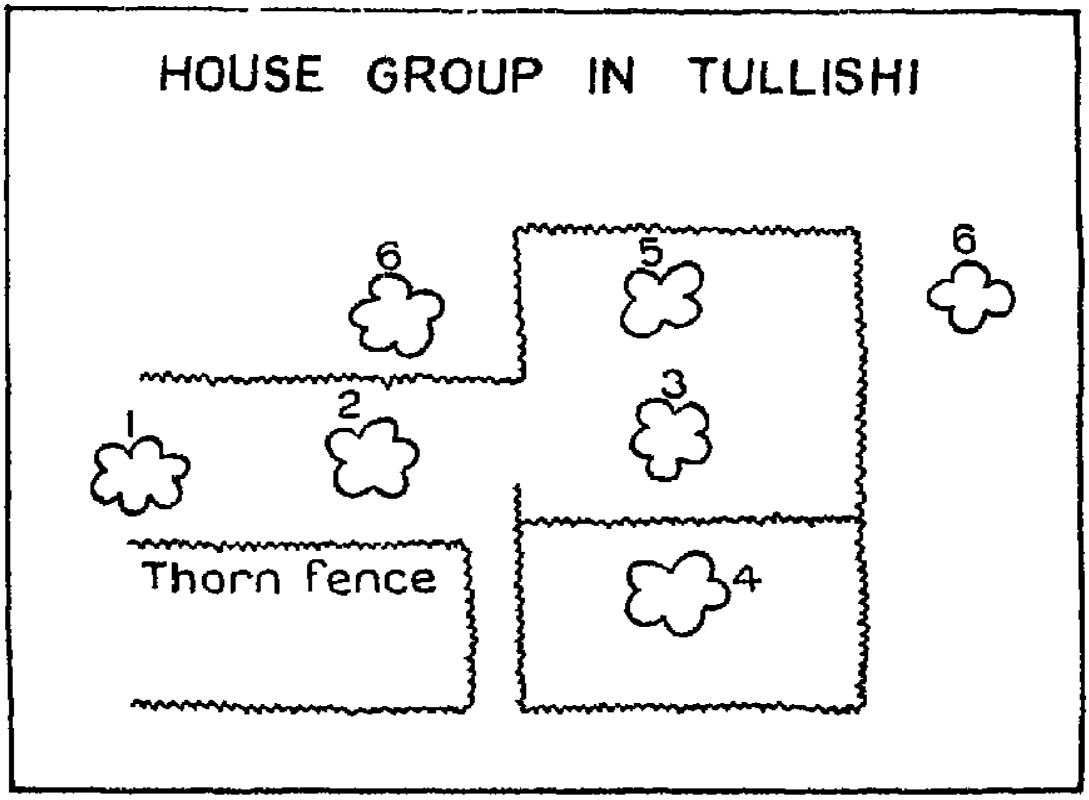
Lack of space frequently forces the individual houses into an irregular shape. Nor would the ring-pattern of its layout always be visible from outside. For mostly the houses stand so close together that their walls almost touch; often, too, neighbouring houses are built on to each other. They merge in large, compact blocks, shaped to no regular design, and separated by a maze of narrow, winding alleys, which are the village streets of Tullishi.

The occupants of a house are a man and his wife (or wives) and their unmarried children. Young lads stay part of the year in the cattle camps down in the plain. There their fathers visit them from time to time and spend a few days and nights with them in the cattle kraal. When a young man marries, he either takes over the house of his father (if the latter is dead) or builds himself a new house as near it as the crowded space would allow. Girls, as we shall hear, sleep in the house of a neighbour from the age of twelve to fifteen till they marry. They then leave the paternal home altogether for their husbands' houses and localities. A widow who is too old to remarry would abandon the house of her husband, and return to the place of her father or brothers, to end her days among her own family. This eventual return of widows to the paternal home represents a definite claim, supported by strong sentiment. During my stay in Tullishi an old widow was prevented from taking over her late brother's house by his widow, who refused to leave: in her anger, the old woman burnt down the house, and though the people thought she had gone too far, their sympathies were with her.

We find, then, clusters of houses, inhabited by paternal kin. Often several of these houses are surrounded by a common thorn fence, so that the compound, composed of a number of houses, rather than the

single house, appears as the unit of settlement. The following sketch-map shall illustrate a typical arrangement:

House 1 is occupied by a certain Tutu and his wife.
House 2 by a widowed sister of Tutu's grandfather; the house belonged originally to Tutu's grandfather, who is dead.
House 3 is occupied by a father-brother of Tutu, with his wife and children.
House 4 by Tutu's father and mother.
House 5 by Tutu's elder brother, with wife and children.
The houses marked 6 belong to another family.



The pressure on space in the Tullishi villages thus reflects a sociological motive—the strong coherence of the patrilineal kinship group. The men of Tullishi live all their lives in the same house or compound, and generation after generation remains bound to the same small locality. However, this bond is loosening: in recent years about fifteen men have decided to move their houses down to the foot of the hill, to be nearer their cattle camps and cultivations.

Clan

The coherence and continuity of the patrilineal lineage is contradicted by the clan organization. Matrilineal, it cuts across this local grouping. The successive generations which occupy the same house and locality must belong to different clans. Social identity established through clan membership and that other, inescapable, identification of individuals

with the groups among which they are living, follow divergent paths.[1]

The clans (*silya*) are irregularly scattered. They vary greatly in size, and certain very large clans are sub-divided in as many as four to five sub-clans. The sub-clans are primarily defined by the range of exogamy, which refers to these sub-divisions, and not to the large, 'theoretical' clan. The sub-clans have no names; one refers to a particular sub-clan by mentioning the names of families which belong to it. Nor is the concept of 'sub-clan' expressed by a special term: yet this sub-division is clearly conceived: everybody will tell you at once how many sub-clans there are in his clan. Occasionally, however, this information will be found to be inaccurate and to lag slightly behind the actual segmentation. Thus I was told by every informant that the clan Karre had four sub-clans and that the clan Kafunya had no sub-divisions. On examining a large number of families belonging to the two clans, I discovered that Karre had five sub-clans, i.e. clan sections which practised intermarriage, and Kafunya two. Even in the face of this irrefutable evidence, my informants only very reluctantly admitted that they had been wrong. The explanation is evidently this. The sub-division is progressive, not static. Once segmentation starts, it advances easily: any family may carry it further by deciding that its relationship with another family is sufficiently remote to warrant intermarriage. But the rest of the clan, and the community at large, will for some time remain unaware of this new stage in the progressive segmentation. Some of these sub-sections are indeed still very small, and bear all the signs of the recent transition; for, with the exception of exogamy, they have not yet adopted the various group obligations which are typical of the fully-fledged sub-clan, but leave them still to the clan at large or to the sub-clans of older standing from which the new sections have split off. In clans, on the other hand, in which sub-division has not (or not yet) set in, the coherence of the group is still strong; the first step is clearly the most difficult. Significantly, the as yet undivided clans are invariably much larger than the largest clan section.

The hypothetical family which started the sub-division by its first endogamous marriage may have justified its action by the absence of traceable or remembered kinship relations. But this criterion is only a limiting factor, not the motive for the sub-division (which may have been in the nature of an individual incentive). Even the smallest sub-clan does not yet coincide with, or approach to, a single lineage.[2] The very small and obviously quite recent sub-section of Kafunya, for example, numbers eight men and their families, who belong to three different lineages. In the clan as well as sub-clan the group unity is derived, not from traceable biological relationship (as in the lineage), but from a

[1] We note that the two principles of identity are, structurally, not of the same order. In spite of the massing of patrilineal kin in the same locality, the local group is not thought of as derived from common descent. It does not therefore represent the exact counterpart to the matrilineal clan, i.e. a patrilineal 'sib'.

[2] For definition of 'lineage' *see* p. 186, footnote.

common descent accepted as a matter of dogma and tradition. No genealogies exist which would lead back to the first, common ancestors from whom clans are assumed to have descended, nor are the names of these ancestors known or remembered. The Tullishi clans are conceived of as being of equal age and as having arisen in a like fashion—with one exception: the clan called Kafunya, which means 'gourd', is vaguely associated with the primordial gourd and the ancestors of the tribe who sprang from it; but it is in no other way distinguished from the rest of the clans. Kafunya is, incidentally, the only clan in Tullishi whose name can be identified linguistically.

The following list enumerates the ten Tullishi clans. The first five are large and important, the next four small and of lesser significance in the life of the tribe; the last clan has died out. The numbers of sub-clans are given in brackets, the large, important sub-clans being put first, and the smaller (and partly 'new') sections added by means of a plus sign (thus: 2+3).

1. Karre (2+3)
2. Kafunya (1+1)
3. Kawe (2)
4. Kadibenda (2+1)
5. Kame (2)
6. Kadowa
7. Kamdu
8. Kasselo
9. Keffi
10. Karore[1]

Though the clans (and sub-clans) are distributed over the whole community, they are not everywhere equally strong. These are the largest clans in each of the six Tullishi villages:

Western Section:	Terdi—Kafunya
	Tutu—Kawe I
	Lau—Kawe II, Kadibenda
Eastern Section:	Karlenya—Karre I
	Tikepa—Karre II, Kadibenda
	Lataro—Kafunya

This arrangement has, of course, no permanency, being constantly modified with the conclusion of marriages and the birth of children. We might emphasize that the sub-divided clans do not break up along the lines of local division (villages or dual division). In the sub-division of clans, therefore, their local dispersal plays no part, and the clans maintain their character of units intersecting the local groups.

Clans and clan-names are common knowledge in Tullishi, and every

[1] The clans 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8 occur also in Kamdang; clans 2 and 3 in the Miri tribe.

adult will without difficulty reproduce the whole list. The clan names are so conspicuous an emblem of group membership that people often call each other by their clan names rather than their personal names: 'You, Kafunya!' or 'You, Karre!' The group identity is also demonstrated by eating avoidances between the clans. Young, unmarried men of different clans must never eat or drink together, either on the farms or in their houses. Adult men belonging to different clans may eat meat and simsim together, and may also drink beer in each other's company; the restrictions thus allow for the demands of tribal conviviality. But grain, honey, and milk remain forbidden in inter-clan meals. One conceives of no sanctions which would follow the breach of these rules, save shame and public contempt. The avoidances are disregarded, however, in the narrow family, i.e. between biological relations on the father's side; living together, they could hardly avoid sharing meals. Recently another exemption has come into being: it concerns the chief, who will now offer milk with tea, in Arab fashion, to his guests, regardless of their clan membership.

Clan unity is thrown into relief in the elaborate rituals which, in Tullishi, surround death. The identity of the clan is finally expressed, fully on the mystic plane, in the conviction that witchcraft can never be effective against fellow clansmen or clanswomen.

As a social determinant, the clan controls two domains of group life. First, marriage, through exogamy and the law of levirate. An offence against the exogamous rules is believed to cause severe, fatal illness. Yet as we have seen, families and individuals must in the past have been ready to face this threat when they broke away from the accepted marriage prohibitions. Secondly, the clan concept determines the attitude of the society towards homicide and revenge. Like exogamy, this aspect of clan organization concerns, in sub-divided clans, the sub-clan, not the clan at large.[1]

The control of clan activity and co-operation is diffuse—a conformity of action without defined leadership. There are no clan heads; nor are the spiritual leaders of the community, the grain priests, qualified to share in this control. Their office, of patrilineal succession, places them outside the clan system, and their religious duties serve the local section or the tribe at large.

The influences of clan and locality meet, and cross, in many fields. If the former restricts inter-group meals or hospitality, the latter erects barriers to social intercourse at large; if, at funeral feasts, clan membership and unity count above everything, the etiquette of 'funeral hill' reminds the congregation of the 'invisible boundary'; against the threat of witchcraft which flows from the dual local division, the clans represent enclaves of safety; and if clan relationship dictates revenge and blood feud, the traditional feud between east and west is often behind the crime—be

[1] Public opinion is not quite agreed on this point, which is probably another instance of its 'lagging behind' the progressive clan segmentation.

it a real crime or an imaginary murder by witchcraft. The clan, in a sense, balances the local segmentation. It represents, in Tullishi, the only group bond independent of locality, and one of the few bonds which support the integration of the community at large, across the deep gulf of local division.

Kindred

Like the kinship terminology of Korongo, with which it is best compared, the Tullishi system utilizes both classificatory and descriptive terms. We discover certain faint linguistic affinities in the two terminologies: mother is *nim* in Korongo and *nyima* in Tullishi; grandfather *dadu* in Korongo and *tata* in Tullishi; the Korongo term for mother-brother, *renim*, seems derived from the Tullishi roots, *riye-nyima*. More significant are the structural affinities which link the two terminological systems. They share the reciprocal identification for grandparents-grandchildren, and parents- and children-in-law, which reflect typical relationships—the friendly intimacy that obtains between a grandfather and his grandchildren, and the rigid eating avoidances between in-laws. Both are also distinguished from all other Nuba systems (patrilineal and matrilineal) by the absence of a reciprocal classificatory term for mother-brother and sister-son. Both terminologies finally fail to differentiate between full-brothers and half-brothers, though the former must belong to identical, and the latter to different clans. But there exist certain marked divergences as well; to a large extent, they are explained by the differences in the social structure of the two tribes.

Kinship Terminology

Grandfather (pat. and mat.)	*tata*
Grandmother (pat. and mat.)	*tata*
Grandchildren	*tata*
Father	*kapa*
Mother	*nyima*
Father-brother	like father, or *kema*
Father-sister	like mother
Mother-brother	*ririma* (derived from *riye-nyima*)
Mother-sister	descriptive
Son, daughter	*tamadi, lamtodi*
Brother, sister—full	*riye, kinye*
Brother, sister—half	*riye, kinye*
Father-brother's children	like brother, sister
Father-sister's children	like brother, sister
Mother-brother's children	descriptive
Mother-sister's children	descriptive, or like sister-children
Brother's children	like son, daughter
Sister's children	*kolle*

Kinship Terminology—continued

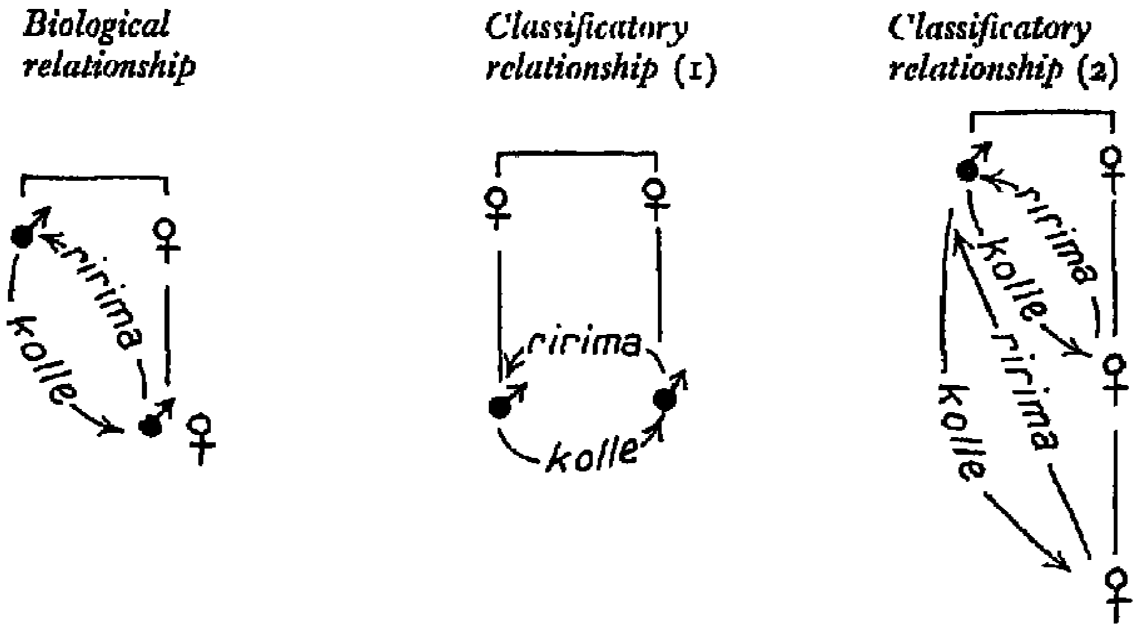
Husband	*bede*
Wife	*ninya*
Wife's parents	*kero*
Husband's parents	*kero*
Son's wife	*kero*
Daughter's husband	*kero*
Brother's wife	*kero*
Sister's husband	*kero*
Wife's brother, sister	*kaju*
Husband's brother, sister	*kero*

The best introduction into this kinship system will be through a comparison of the related terminologies of Tullishi and Korongo. We note three divergences. First, the kinship terminology of Tullishi recognizes sex difference in the main kinship degrees. Different terms exist for son and daughter, brother and sister, male and female cousins. This unique feature in the Nuba kinship systems reflects logically the fundamental distinction between male and female principle embodied in Tullishi culture.

Secondly, the principle of the 'identification of brothers' is applied only to cognates on the father's side: the father's brothers and sisters are called 'father' and 'mother', their children again 'brothers' and 'sisters', and the children of a brother are identified with one's own children. In the case of brothers and father-brothers, this repetitive pattern, which produces an infinite, interlocked chain of 'parent' and 'brother' generations, corresponds to the infinite and continuous living unit formed by the patrilineal lineage. The principle of the living unit also explains the apparently inconsistent use of the term 'brother' for both full brothers and half-brothers. We must add, however, that in practice the 'infinite' paternal lineage of ordinary individuals (i.e. excepting the chief and priests) cannot be traced back more than three generations. In the case of the father's sister, her inclusion into the 'infinite' lineage reflects her potential return, in widowhood, to the family of her birth. Here the logic of the terminological schema seems to demand that her children—the children of a woman called 'mother'—be classed with 'brothers' and 'sisters'; it thus overrules actual social relations, since the children of a brother and a sister must always belong to different living units and clans. It also creates an unusual terminological situation; for the term for cross-cousins is not reciprocal, but differs according to whether it is used by brother's or sister's children: the former call their cross-cousins (i.e. their father-sister's children) 'brother' and 'sister'; the latter use a descriptive term ('mother-brother's child').

On the mother's side, descriptive terms, varying with the biological relationship, preclude the infinite repetition of identical relationships, and the sequence of recognized, intimate kinship degrees is cut short

after two generations. The crucial terms in matrilineal kinship systems, mother-brother (*ririma*) and sister-son or -daughter (*kolle*), are an exception. They are extended to two classificatory relationships, in two different generations. (1) One calls the son of one's mother's elder sister *ririma*, and is called by him *kolle*. This nomenclature is not affected by the respective age of the *ririma* and *kolle* themselves, so that one finds occasionally a 'mother-brother' who is younger than his 'sister-child'. (2) The son of a female (biological) *kolle* is again a *kolle*, and his mother's *ririma* his own *ririma*. The following diagram shall illustrate the various mother-brother and sister-child relationships:



This classificatory use of the terms mother-brother and sister-child has practical significance. We must say, first, that it is essentially optional, replacing the regular, descriptive, nomenclature. But as such, it corresponds to important social rights and obligations—namely, to the potential course of matrilineal inheritance. For where no real (biological) *kolle* are available, the classificatory *kolle* will take their place. We must add also that the classificatory extension of the mother-brother and sister-son relationship is often applied rather vaguely, unsupported by traceable genealogies. The individuals, three generations back, from whose biological relationship the classificatory kinship degree is derived, may no longer be remembered. We cannot say, therefore, whether the classificatory affiliation might not possibly extend beyond the two or three generations of our paradigm. In another sense, however, its limits are clearly defined: for the term *kolle* and *ririma* can only be used within the matrilineal clan. The 'sister-son' relationship, for example, cannot follow from a classificatory brother-sister relationship derived from two brothers, and thus divided in clan membership.

Thirdly, the classificatory term for parents-in-law, *kero*, is extended in Tullishi to the brother's wife, the husband's brothers and sisters, and the sister's husband. This unusual extension is largely consistent with

the kinship etiquette of the tribe, which forbids a wife to eat certain food in the husband's house, and thus with the relations with whom he shares house or homestead. We note, however, that the classificatory terms for in-laws are extended also to a sister's husband, who is outside this living unit; this seems again due to the schematic design of this terminology, which would seem to demand an identical term for the two symmetrical relationships, brother's wife and sister's husband.

The terminological emphasis on the living unit and the paternal lineage rather than the unit of (matrilineal) descent which determines social identity demonstrates that balance between patrilineal and matrilineal affiliation of which the preceding description has shown many instances. Let me add that patrilineal affiliation is recognized, side by side with matrilineal descent, in the double exogamy of the tribe, which forbids marriage in the father's clan also. There is no couvade; but a sacrifice and clan feast arranged by the father for children who have reached the age of nine or ten emphasizes paternal importance at least in the bringing up of his offspring. The matrilineal principle, on the other hand, is expressed in the personal names of the Tullishi people, which reflect the order of birth of children by the same mother.[1]

In inheritance and the payment of bride-price—that is, in kinship rights and obligations in which the qualification of descent bears on the very livelihood of individuals, this balance gains its most striking expression. House and house farms, as we shall see, are bequeathed from father to son; so are the tribal offices, priestship and chieftainship; the bride-price, finally, is normally paid by fathers for their sons. But mother-brothers may assume this duty for a fatherless nephew; and wealth (e.g. livestock and guns) and the hillside farms are inherited in the mother's line, i.e. by sister-sons.

It is, as we can see, an uneasy balance, fostering friction rather than a stable equilibrium. The son, though inheriting his father's house, inherits the farm land of his mother-brother, which might be situated on the other side of the hill, on what is to him forbidden ground. Again, a man's sister will grudge her nephews every economic benefit which they would receive from their father—for example, gifts of livestock, or a bride-price possibly higher than absolutely necessary—since it must reduce the future patrimony of her own sons. Disputes of this kind, fought with bitter hatred, arise frequently, proclaiming that this 'balance' is felt as a maladjustment.

It is, I believe, the consciousness of this maladjustment which crystallizes in the Tullishi myth of origin, and the whole dualistic structure of the society. In it, the antagonism between patrilineal and matrilineal segment is elevated to the dignity of a dogma, projected on to some primordial law, and thus explained and, in a sense, justified. Add to this

[1] To make distinction easier, since the names of birth are limited in number, the father's birth name may be added to that of the son (rarely the daughter). Recently Arab names have become the fashion, chosen by fathers for their sons.

another dogma of Tullishi culture: that witchcraft works only across the dual division of the tribe; that its favourite victims are boys and young men; and that it is exclusively a male faculty. Again, this belief epitomizes, in terms of an eternal law, the sentiments which spring from concrete kinship life—the rivalry, hatred and suspicion between sons and sister-sons.

Let me for a moment interrupt this discussion and turn to the culture of Tullishi's sister tribe, Kamdang. There, in a closely akin social organization, no such dualistic structure has evolved. Why? In Kamdang, the matrilineal principle is paramount: it rules ordinary inheritance as well as succession to the tribal offices. In the more consistent and unitary social structure the tension between paternal and maternal kin cannot exist; its absence means the absence also of the dualistic universe of Tullishi.

The position of wives in Tullishi is defined unequivocally by the matrilineal structure of the society. There can, of course, be no question of a clan adoption of wives. But even the modified adoption into the husband's household, practised in Tullishi as in all Nuba tribes, is only partial, and the clan barrier between husband and wife persists conspicuously within the domestic union. Newly married wives are forbidden to eat meat, honey, and milk in their husbands' house. After two to three years the husband performs the sacrifice of a goat or pig, and man and wife will for the first time eat meat together. With the lapse of this restriction, then, husband and wife stand in the relationship of ordinary adults belonging to different clans. Like ordinary adults, they must observe the remaining avoidances, concerning milk and honey, for the rest of their lives. No supernatural sanction is envisaged; but if a wife broke these rules she would expose herself to much abuse: 'Have you no father to go to for your milk?' people would ask; or 'Are you a dog to drink milk from your husband's cows?'[1]

The independent position of wives in the domestic group appears combined with a considerable measure of independence which they enjoy, as mothers, in the education of their children. Nor is this educational influence restricted to matters relevant to matrilineal affiliation. A mother will keep her children aware of their title to inherit from her brother, and may exercise this title on their behalf. Children also learn from their mothers about witchcraft and other mystic dangers, such as that of leprosy, which is greatly feared in Tullishi and thought to be contagious. Informants always stressed that it is the mothers who would forbid their children to cross the 'invisible boundary' or visit a village where leprosy is believed to be prevalent. I once summoned some young men from across the 'invisible boundary', having been assured by their male kinsfolk that they were old enough to brave the threat of witchcraft: the young men

[1] The milk *tabu* extends also to the woman's own goats, which form part of her dowry or inheritance, and which she keeps with her husband's herds. Nor will she milk the animals, though there is no specific fear of ill effects.

came—only to be fetched back by their enraged mothers. The men shrugged, saying: 'Women are like that.' Such mild disapproval seems the only form of disagreement between men and their wives over the latter's educational prerogatives.

Marriage

The Tullishi marry young, girls when they are about sixteen, men at the age of eighteen or nineteen. Mutual affection is considered an essential condition of marriage. The large majority of men have one wife. With the exception of lunatics and lepers, there are no unmarried men or women in Tullishi. A girl who remained unmarried longer than usual would at once be suspected of leading an immoral life, and called a 'bad woman' and a whore.

The marriage rules, so far as they are not contained in the double exogamy, are laid down in the prohibition of marriage between cross- and parallel-cousins, and between a man and two sisters. Marriage with two women of the same clan or sub-clan is allowed. No sanctions other than that threatening offenders against the exogamous rules are visualized. Incestuous offences are, in fact, denied ever to occur, and incestuous dreams are thought meaningless.

Marriage is both within and without the locality. The 'invisible boundary' is no impediment to marriage. It is an unusual courtship, I thought, in which one must learn to ignore the deep division of the society and to brave the threat of witchcraft. But it appears in no way unusual to the people. The few seasonal feasts and dances which unite the whole population of the hill provide the occasions when the young folk meet and become acquainted; and the courtship of young men, my informants pointed out, would in any case be carried out stealthily, under the cover of darkness, when the fear of witchcraft is silenced.

Having won the affection of a girl, the boy presents her with a bangle of brass or iron, which the girl must show and hand over to her mother. The girl's mother then informs her husband, and the suitor his father. If the parents on both sides are agreeable, the boy's father offers a first bride-price payment to the parents of the girl, two or three goats, which confirms the formal engagement. The young man will continue his nightly visits, no longer a suitor among others, but in the privileged capacity of an accepted future son-in-law. When the girl has reached full maturity, the rest of the bride-price is paid, and, without further ceremony, the young man takes the bride into his house, where he will consummate the marriage.

The value of the bride-price varies but little; nor has it undergone any changes in recent times. It is an accepted rule that one pays for a girl as much as had been previously paid for her mother—no more, no less. The bride-price is called *malle medina*, 'wealth of marriage'. It is mostly calculated in cattle, though paid in a variety of commodities. The total value is three to four cows (approximately £6 to £7), made up

by any of the following items: cows, bulls, goats, pigs, occasionally a gun, axe-blades, cloth, also grain, and almost invariably special spear-points and hoe-blades. The latter are known as *kanda medina*, 'marriage spears', and *tonga medina*, 'marriage hoes'. They have a fixed exchange value, the spears 5 to 6 piastres and the hoes 20 piastres. Neither spear-points nor hoes are used as ordinary weapons or tools. If the former were fixed, like ordinary spear-points, on a shaft, they would lose their value for bride-price payments; the hoes, of peculiar shape, are altogether unsuitable for farm work. Spear-points and hoe-blades are also used in funeral processions, when they are beaten with a short stick, like bells, as an accompaniment to the funeral songs. Apart from this ceremonial use, they are kept and stored in the house against a future need of bride-price, as units of a highly specialized currency and of abstract wealth.

This is an average bride-price: two cows, ten goats, and five marriage hoes (worth in money about £6 10*s*.). The highest bride-price I recorded was worth £8 10*s*., the lowest, consisting only of one bull, one goat, and three marriage hoes, under £2. This bride-price was so exceptionally low merely because the girl's mother and grandmother had married with an equally low bride-price—which explanation satisfied everyone; no one was interested in the original reason for this unusual reduction. I suspected that the girl's mother or grandmother had been 'bad women', in Tullishi parlance; for such women can often be married off only at a greatly reduced bride-price. However, if the moral censure of the past is meant to survive in the bride-price arrangements of the present, this aspect is only too easily eclipsed.

The bride-price (more correctly, the bride-price for a first wife) is paid by the young man's biological father; or, if he has no father, by the full brother of his father; or, in the last resort, by his mother-brother. The bride-price becomes the property of the girl's father or father-brother, father-sister, or father-sister's son (i.e. the relations who would normally inherit her father's wealth). That the bridegroom's mother-brother may be called upon to provide the bride-price, and that the bride's paternal relations receive a bride-price whose value is determined by the girl's maternal descent, may be considered more instances of the balance between patrilineal and matrilineal principle.

This potential inclusion of several relations on both the bride's and bridegroom's side in the bride-price transaction reflects the 'contractual aspect' of the bride-price. The kinship members who receive, or are entitled to receive, the bride-price are all 'guarantors' of the marriage, interested in its success, since they would be responsible for the refund of the bride-price in divorce and similar cases. Indeed, successive generations remain concerned in the marriage contract; for the claims to a bride-price refund and the obligation of producing the refund are hereditary, exactly as wealth is hereditary. Take the following instance. A man whom we will call A, had paid bride-price for his wife, B, who later died under conditions which warranted the return of the bride-price.

A himself did not implement the claim, as during his lifetime he was in no need of additional funds. But after his death his sister-son, as the heir to A's wealth, revived the claim, demanding the bride-price from B's father-sister's son, to whom the bride-price must have come down with other hereditary property. The latter defended himself by saying that he had no idea what his patrimony had contained, the bride-price transaction having happened long before his time. Nor, in fact, could the claimant, a young man, have known of it unless he had been so informed by his elders. It so happened that he found himself in need of a bride-price, and his father, instead of providing it for him, told him of this untapped source. These claims never lapse, even when the biological relationship is no longer traceable, save in the form of a vague knowledge that the crucial mother-brother-sister-son relationship occurred in some past generation.

The contractual aspect of bride-price is further expressed in the dowry with which the bride's father equips his daughter when she joins the household of her husband. It consists of household utensils, various foodstuffs—grain, groundnuts, simsim, beans, roasted grain for beer-making—sometimes also a hillside farm or two, and invariably one goat and one pig. The total money value is about £2, i.e. roughly a third of that of the bride-price. The animals remain the wife's property; the husband may under no condition use them or their offspring for the bride-price of sons.

The second aspect of the bride-price—as a payment for the woman's fecundity—is at first sight somewhat puzzling. To begin with, this high bride-price in a matrilineal society is in itself unusual. The first and third aspect alone cannot explain it. Moreover, the association of the bride-price payments with fecundity is manifest in the rules governing the refund of the bride-price: if a wife dies childless, the husband can claim the return of the full bride-price; a man can even divorce a wife on the grounds of barrenness, after several years of childless marriage, being again entitled to a full refund of the bride-price. This claim, incidentally, is not replaceable by the offer of another wife from the family or clan of the deceased. If the wife who died had even one child, no refund is admissible. In ordinary divorce, if there had been a child or children, and if they remain with the father, he can only demand the return of half the bride-price. Now, these claims of fathers seem inconsistent with a matrilineal kinship system, which implies that children belong, sociologically, to the mother's group. The same is true of the levirate rules of Tullishi, of which we shall hear more presently. The explanation can only be this: though the social group of the father, his clan, has no claim to the offspring, his strongly pronounced living unit and lineage have. Again, then, patrilineal affiliation is balanced against matrilineal claims—in a 'balance' which must entail latent antagonism.[1]

[1] Significantly, this latent antagonism is again absent in Kamdang: no refund of the bride-price is admissible once the bride moved into the husband's house.

The 'possessive' aspect of the bride-price and marriage is as clearly pronounced as in most other Nuba tribes. With the first instalment of the bride-price the bridegroom attains the monopoly of the premarital favours which, until then, the girl would bestow freely on many friends. They consist in the usual sexual play of lying together, limbs touching, and the man petting the girl's breasts. The completion of the bride-price entitles the man to consummate the marriage, which law admits of no exceptions. From the official engagement onwards, he is justified in defending his marital rights, less severely during the period of engagement, and with utmost severity, even to the extent of killing both wife and paramour, in adultery proper. But the urge of jealousy varies individually; many men, discovering their wives' infidelities, will merely send them back to their parents and demand divorce. Adultery proper is said to be rare; 'interloping' during the engagement is admitted to be widespread, and would rarely deflect the bridegroom from his intentions of marriage. *But a bridegroom would never cohabit with his own bride before she* joined him legitimately in his house. In this one-sided fashion, then, chastity remains an essential aspect of sex morality, and marriage the legitimate fulfilment of sexual desire. As in Korongo, this quixotic self-denial of betrothed goes hand in hand with a marriage invariably founded on mutual affection.

Widowhood and Divorce

Widows still young enough for a second marriage are expected to remarry in a modified levirate, either their late husband's full brother, sister-son, or some other man in the late husband's clan or sub-clan. No bride-price is paid in these marriages. The rules are not strict, however, and the widow is quite free to marry outside her first husband's family or clan. In this case her second husband must pay the full bride-price to the sister-son of the deceased. Long, unexplained absence of the husband is treated like widowhood. Old widows, as we have heard, return to their own families. In one instance (cases of this kind seem to be rare) a young widow insisted on remaining single and staying in her late husband's house. She 'loved her husband', she said, and declined to remarry, but was too young to return to her father's or brother's house. Her unorthodox decision quite upset the routine of kinship life, since her late husband's widowed sister demanded the house for herself. Eventually, as I have described above, the enraged sister-in-law burned down the house in dispute.

Divorce is frequent and easy to obtain. The initiative is mostly the man's. These are typical grounds for divorce: barrenness or sickness of the wife, or leprosy of the husband; repeated adultery of the wife; her shortcomings as a housewife or her quarrelsome temper, which would make life with her difficult. I remember the case of a woman suffering from guinea-worm who used to come day after day to my camp asking for medicine; she was in the unfortunate predicament of being both sterile

and sick, and she was greatly afraid that, if I did not cure her soon, her husband would divorce her. But different men will decide differently —some prefer to keep even a 'useless' wife, a barren woman, or an insufferable shrew.

Divorce is simply effected by sending the wife back to her parents. Often a husband will call neighbours as witnesses to testify that his wife is constantly quarrelling or neglecting her work in the house. In divorce owing to barrenness, the husband can claim a total refund of the bride-price from the woman's relatives. The same holds good in divorce on the grounds of leprosy or adultery; children, legitimate or illegitimate, are in this case claimed by the wife's family, unless the husband agrees to a certain deduction (it amounted to five goats for a girl in a case which I witnessed). In all other types of divorce the husband can demand only half the bride-price back, and must wait till his ex-wife has found a new husband; the latter pays the full bride-price to the woman's father, who then returns the statutory half to the ex-husband. The children stay with their father. A divorcée who is known to have been a 'useless wife', an inveterate adulteress, will rarely find a new husband willing to pay the full bride-price. In fact, women of this kind are described as the ideal wives for poor men who cannot afford the customary amount. In every kind of divorce the wife takes her own property (derived from dowry or inheritance) with her. This does not affect the right of the children to inherit her property, as I shall explain in the following.

Inheritance

The property of men is inherited in this fashion. House, house farms and the 'far farms' in the plain are inherited by sons, who may divide the land between them. If there are no sons, daughters or grandsons can claim the patrimony. Hillside farms (*palmudi*)—that is, the 'far farms' of old—and all movable property, including livestock as well as such personal belongings as tools and weapons, are inherited matrilineally.[1] They go, in the first place, to full brothers, in the second place to sister-sons, in the third place to sisters who have no sons or to their daughters, or, finally, to mother-sister's sons. Sisters would often act as trustees for their young sons. If there are several heirs of equal order, the property must be divided. The crops on the farms and in the granaries are classed, surprisingly, with this 'movable property'. As a result, young orphans are left without subsistence. They are adopted by the heir, i.e. the full brother or sister-son of their father; they live with him till they grow up, when boys will receive their father's land and return to his abandoned house, and girls marry, their bride-price (as mentioned already) going to their foster-father and heir of their father's property. Widows inherit nothing.

[1] We note the strengthened patrilineal claims under modern conditions. The main land property in the past was the hillside farm, which was inherited matrilineally; to-day, it is the 'far farm' in the plain, which is inherited by sons.

Women—that is, sisters and daughters—can thus inherit land and livestock, which become their full, alienable property. About half the women of Tullishi own such property. At their death it is bequeathed to their sons or daughters, or divided between them.

If no full brothers, sisters or sister-children are alive, the property normally inherited matrilineally can be claimed by more distant relations —the classificatory sister-sons of whom I have spoken above. As I have said there, the exact biological relationship can rarely be traced. But the people are usually satisfied if old men can, from their memories, confirm that the present relationship is derived from an original brother-sister relationship.

I have mentioned already that, owing to these rules of inheritance, sons lose the hillside farms of their fathers and inherit instead land that belonged to their mother-brother and may therefore be most inconveniently situated. This difficulty is overcome by two means: first, the heir of such land can sell it to his cousins, whom it would benefit better; and, secondly, a son may buy his father's hillside land while the latter is still alive, so as not to forfeit it after his death. This last purchase, however, is limited to one farm plot; it must, besides, be well substantiated by witnesses, lest the change of ownership be not recognized by the heirs. The following case bears on this point: A certain Tiya had died, leaving no brothers or sister-sons. Three daughters of his sister inherited the land, which consisted of several plots, and began to cultivate it. A son of Tiya claimed the entire land on the grounds that he had bought it from his father for thirteen goats before the latter's death. The son failed to establish his claim, partly because he could not produce witnesses, and partly because such an unusually large purchase was in itself dubious.

Adolescence and Adulthood

This aspect of Tullishi culture is quickly described; for no age-grade system exists, and the *rites de passage* are suggested rather than fully elaborated.

In the two villages which practise circumcision, the operation, which seems without religious significance, is performed when the boys are eight or nine years old. About twenty boys are collected, circumcised together, and kept for ten days in a grass hut built specially for this purpose just outside the village. When children—of both sexes—reach the age of about ten, their fathers kill a goat and arrange a beer feast, to which they invite their whole clan. Beyond emphasizing paternal affiliation, it is not clear what this ceremony purports. It certainly does not mark any significant phase in adolescence. Not until two or three years later comes an important change in the lives of boys and girls: the former begin to herd cattle and to live in the cattle camps; the girls, whose breasts will have begun to show, will leave the house of their parents and sleep in special 'girls' huts'. These are in the homes of well-to-do neighbours who have a sufficiently large house and who

are, besides, men of good reputation. About ten girls would congregate in one hut, sleeping together, and also having their meals together, in each other's home in turn. The main purpose of this arrangement is said to be that it permits courtship and the more or less innocent forms of premarital licence, unhindered by the feelings of shame which must exist between suitors (or paramours) and the parents of their beloved.

One of the seasonal rites of the tribe is also the occasion for an annual feast which concerns the young folk especially and contains many features familiar from the ceremonies surrounding adolescence in other groups. The rite, called *tanya tika*, 'ritual of clearing', is celebrated in January or February, immediately before the grass is cut on new farm plots. It begins, like all seasonal rites of Tullishi, with three days of sacrifices: first in the house of the grain priest of the western section; next in the house of the chief; and, finally, in the house of the Great Grain Priest in the eastern part.[1] On the fourth day the young men of the tribe fight with leather thongs, cut from antelope hide. Older men, too, may join. All wear bandages of *tibeldi* bark as a protection against the severe lashes, which nearly always draw blood. This flogging-fight is called *basso*. One fights in local teams, and in a fixed order. The young men of Karlenya visit Kurmedi, to fight the local team in front of the grain priest's house; the teams of Lau and Tutu meet each other in Lau, again in front of the house of the local grain priest; in Terdi, the young men of the village fight together in front of the chief's house. The fight ends at dark. The next day sees the *lantoto* dance of the young men and girls. The men wear a head-dress of ostrich feathers, and the girls are covered with ornaments. The dancers from each village make the round of the whole hill; they bring their own drums with them and dance for a while in each village, before moving on to the next. The dancers from Kurmedi start the procession; when they have returned home, Karlenya follows; then Tutu, Lau, and Terdi. On these visits the various groups of dancers must observe the ritual order of proceeding round the hill, the eastern groups walking in 'clock-wise' direction, the western groups 'anti-clock-wise'. The same evening the girls in each village climb up to a low hillock nearby, and, arrived on the top, roast beans, and dance and sing. Soon afterwards they return home and distribute the beans among their relations. On this day, too, young girls are presented with an axe by their mother-brothers. The meaning of this custom (which, incidentally, is denied to represent a 'ritual'—*tanya*) is not clear. The *basso* fight of the young men is explained as a rite to ensure the fertility of the land. But whatever the symbolic meaning of these ceremonies may be, sociologically they constitute one of the few, vital bonds uniting the tribe at large, across clan and locality.

The rhythm of growth which in most Nuba societies is elaborated in

[1] In the various seasonal rites the order of sacrifices changes round so that each of the three tribal dignitaries in turn starts one of the ceremonies, concludes another, and performs a third in between his colleagues.

the cycles of age classes and age-grade promotion is faintly discernible. Every five years Tullishi performs a certain dance called *tingale*: it embraces men and women, and all localities of the hill, in the same order as the *lantodo* dances just described. In the year after the *tingale*, a similar dance of the girls follows, known as *shelogola*. In the *tingale* the boys who have reached puberty are for the first time allowed to join in the dances of their seniors; the *shelogola* has the same meaning for girls; moreover, only after they have at least once performed this dance may girl brides be taken into the house of their husbands for the consummation of the marriage. These two dances, then, define a crucial phase in maturity and, in a sense, the climax of adolescence. They are the nearest approach of Tullishi culture to the concept of initiation or *rites de passage*.

Chieftainship

The Tullishi call their chief *kyora*, or *kyora manta*, Master of the Spear, a title derived from the sacred spear which forms one of the tribal regalia. To the Arabs, and in Government files, he is known, incongruously, as *Sultan*. For the chief shares his title 'Master' with the grain priests, the *kyora ma male*, or Masters of the Grain.[1] Tullishi chieftainship goes back to the beginnings of tribal memory. It is hereditary, and divided between two royal houses which take office alternately. No explanation, mythical or otherwise, of this dual division of royal descent exists. It reappears in the parallel office of the Great Grain Priest in the eastern section. The genealogies of the chiefs are not well remembered; the people can only produce, not without much consultation and correction, the names of nine past chiefs, in the following order (the home village and clan of the chiefs are shown in brackets):

Dynasty A	*Dynasty B*
1. Nyagadu (Terdi, ?)	?
2. Gyama (Terdi, Kafunya)	3. Kashere (Terdi, Kamdu)
4. Katulla (Terdi, Kawe)	5. Laduru (Tikepa, Kasselo)
6. Kafesha (Terdi, Kadibenda)	7. Shonyale (Terdi, Kawe)
8. Kafelesha (Karlenya, Karre I)	9. Kafeza (Terdi, Kadibenda)
10. Tiya (Lataro, Karc II)	

The two dynasties are not thought of as related. In the single dynasty succession is from father to classificatory son. Owing to the wide scope of this succession, chiefs come occasionally from different localities, to which their branch of the lineage may have moved in the past. They reside, however, invariably in the village Terdi, in the western section, where the two houses of the chiefs, one for each dynasty, stand side by side. There they lie also buried, by the side of their house. Succeeding

[1] See also the name for rainmaker in Kamdang: *kyora ma me*, Master of the Rain.

in paternal line, the chiefs belong, of course, to different clans. We note that of the ten chiefs only two came from small clans.

The hereditary succession was interrupted, temporarily, after the death of Kafelesha, when an ambitious and clever man, Bakelle, usurped the throne with the help of the *Nazir* of the Mesiri Arabs, who had the ear of the Government. Bakelle could speak Arabic, which the rightful heir could not, and thus seemed a more promising chief under modern conditions. It was soon discovered, however, that he counted for little among his people and was never accepted fully as chief. He was deposed in 1927.[1]

Though Bakelle had no legitimate claim to chieftainship, he was intimately linked with it and in a most favourable position to usurp it. He was one of the two 'king-makers' of Tullishi, who are entrusted with the selection of a new chief from the numerous 'sons' who would be candidates. The king-maker is known as *abanyora*, Maker of Chiefs; his office is hereditary in the father's line, but more rigidly than either chieftainship or priestship, being bequeathed to the eldest biological son; only if the eldest son is sick, deaf, or an imbecile would the office go to the next eldest. The death of a chief is followed by an interregnum lasting about one year, i.e. till the harvest after the following rains. During this period the two king-makers rule the community; they study the question of succession, considering carefully the age, health, intelligence, and general temperamental dispositions of the candidates. When they are agreed on the successor, they visit him in his house one night, while he is asleep; they carry a gourd filled with ashes, which they throw over him, waking him with cries like 'those of hyenas'. Thus the chief-elect learns of his election. He cannot decline the office, even though he might be afraid of the magic threat to his life which it entails—but more of this later.

In the appointment of a new chief another tribal dignitary has an important role to play, the *tafelonga ma yora*. He is a classificatory elder brother of the chief, though not necessarily an old man, equally appointed by the king-makers. He acts as the ritual assistant of the chief, performing the royal sacrifices, holding the sacred spear during ceremonies, and so forth. He alone, apart from the chief, may touch the regalia with impunity. His office ends with the death of the chief whom he served, when he retires into private life. But before his retirement it falls to him to remove the sacred iron earring (*tugun*) from the left ear of the dead chief. As soon as it becomes known that the chief is dead, all the people in the house will flee in fear, save the *tafelonga*, who stays behind for his last task of office. He hides the ring under a tree between the two chiefly houses. No one will go near it: a small red flame betrays its presence. There it remains until another chief is installed, and the new *tafelonga* fixes it in the ear of the new *kyora*.

On the day after his election has been announced to him, the new chief sits down on the ground outside his house: he must not sit on a

[1] Reports describe him as 'useful during the patrol', but add that he 'had no real hold over his people', and was '*Sultan* in name only'.

stool or *angreb*. A grass hut is built for him, in which he will stay for one month, together with his senior wife. During this month there is dancing every day in front of his hut. The people from the whole hill come to salute their new chief; mothers bring their children and infants, so that 'his soul (*katgane*) should know them'—that is, recognize them in the prophetic dreams which warn the chief if any danger, illness, or famine threatens his people. He sprinkles his visitors with water, to make them strong and healthy. Throughout these coronation ceremonies fear of witchcraft and the dual division of the tribe are in abeyance.

After a month the grass hut is pulled down, and the chief moves to his official residence. A great beer feast and the sacrifice of a bull, killed by the *tafelonga* with the sacred spear of the chief, concludes the ceremony. The *tafelonga* hands the chief a tall forked stick which he (the *tafelonga*) has cut from the *aradai* tree, and which the chief (like grain priests and *abanyora*) will henceforth carry on all ritual occasions. On the same day the chief is also invested with his sacred earring.

These, then, are the regalia of Tullishi: the iron earring; the forked stick; the sacred spear—of which there are two, one in each royal house; and a piece of trunk cut from the ebony tree. The new chief must cut it himself, by night and in secrecy, and put it up in a narrow enclosure in his house, beside the dead tree trunks which his predecessors have placed there before him.[1] This place is used for the sacrifices of the chief. No one but he may step into this enclosure, at the penalty of sudden death.[2]

The whole physical life of the chief is dominated by sacred, mystic laws. Many of his dreams are prophetic, and after such dreams he must sacrifice a bull or cow: a number of animal skulls strung up on his doorposts bear witness to past sacrifices. No one may enter his sleeping-hut at night and wake him abruptly from his sleep; for his soul is roaming about, seeing all the visions that appear to him in dreams: frightened, it might fail to return to his body, and he would die. (Sudden awakening does not matter with ordinary human beings.) The people of Tullishi would be afraid even to go near the chief's house or sit under his grass roof after sunset. Strangers from other hills are unaffected by this magic and would feel no fear. The chief is forbidden to eat the flesh of dog or pig; the former *tabu* applies to the grain priests, the king-makers, and the *tafelonga* as well; the latter to the chief alone. Unlike all other adults of the tribe, the chief is also forbidden to eat meat or drink beer with anyone not of his clan.

The most striking, and indeed unique, aspect of this mystic chieftainship is the belief in a special disease befalling chiefs—the *mara mesalli*,

[1] In the house of the present chief only three such trunks are left, the rest having been destroyed in a fire.

[2] I was regarded as an exception. Showing me his various magic possessions, the chief produced, between the spears and the sacred tree trunks, and with as much pride and importance, a big sow, which he had bought for the truly royal price of £1.

the 'illness of God'.[1] All Tullishi chiefs, it is said, are subject to a mysterious disease which no one can describe, and which causes them to die prematurely. They lose weight, grow weak, cannot speak, suffer from pains in head and chest, and die five or six days after the symptoms have first appeared. There is no explanation of the origin or cause of this disease, save that 'God sends it'. The idea that it might be due to human agency is ridiculed, nor can witchcraft be made responsible; for the chief (like the grain priests) is immune from witchcraft. Yet the meaning of the disease is never doubted: it is to prevent chiefs 'from becoming old'. This concept is familiar from other African tribes: there chiefs are killed ritually before they reach old age lest, with their decreasing physical faculties, their magic powers weaken also.[2]

Now, in a political discussion which I had with some old men of the tribe, among them king-makers and *tafelonga*, the *tafelonga* voiced the opinion, shared by many, that the present chief was too young and inexperienced. (He is perhaps forty or forty-five.) I pointed out that this accusation accorded ill with the conviction that no chief could reach mature age. None of the men could see the contradiction. A contradiction it nevertheless remains—at least so long as chieftainship is measured by the common standards of political leadership: experience, maturity of judgement, influence acquired through age. But it is clear that these standards cannot legitimately be applied to the chiefs of Tullishi. Theirs is a mystic, not a rational office. Their justification is in their being rather than in any concrete acts of leadership. We shall describe presently the narrow limitations of this chieftainship when discussing the tribal law. Let me anticipate the actions by which the chief of Tullishi can control the social life of his group and exercise that decisive supreme power which alone establishes political authority.

The chief was a leader in raids and wars. But it was in his sacred rather than temporal capacity that he assumed command: his prophetic dreams would foretell threatening attacks by other tribes, or promise Tullishi a victorious war upon her neighbours. If a blood feud broke out, the individual threatened by revenge would seek sanctuary in the chief's house (or in the house of a grain priest) till the anger of his pursuers died down—a vain hope, it appears, in most cases. Here, then, the chief obstructed rather than furthered the cause of justice. People might appeal to the chief's power of divination to discover an unknown thief or homicide, or the guilt or innocence of a culprit denying the crime. The accused would swear on the sacred spear of the chief, and one believes that, if he perjured himself, he would die by a spear. The spear ordeal is invoked also in disputes between the chief himself and

[1] The Tullishi name for illness and disease, *mara* or *amara*, has no connexion with the Arab *marad*.

[2] It is impossible to say whether the 'illness of the chiefs' in Tullishi has a physiological foundation, in some hereditary disease. My impression is that the present chief suffers from tuberculosis. He was very ill in 1938, and everyone thought his time had come; however, he recovered.

recalcitrant subjects, who are made to swear that they would keep the peace.

Finally, the chief is the master of the rain magic vested, as we have heard, in the western section of the hill. But the dual division of the tribe turns this ritual prerogative into a weakness rather than a support of chiefly authority. In the event of drought the chief would sacrifice a pig on a path not far from his house: the blood of the animal, dripping on the ground, procures rain. Yet if the chief, for some reason, omitted or delayed the sacrifice, or if it had been in vain, and rain had fallen on the western, but not on the eastern side of the hill, the people there would unfailingly interpret the failure of the rains as an act of malice or selfishness on the part of the western villages. They would take the law into their own hands: they would destroy the fields in the west, or raid the villages and kill all the pigs they could lay their hands on as a mass sacrifice for rain. The more peaceful solution, to request that the chief should, by another sacrifice, remove the spell, is rarely considered of sufficient promise. If everything proves in vain, one resorts to the most severe measure, of unfailing magic, which is to stone to death some unfortunate person from the western villages. The stoning to death, incidentally, seems to have no special magic or mystic significance: it is explained as a prudent precaution against revenge; for one cannot trace the throwers of stones, while knives and spears 'have owners'.

In the opposite case, if rain had been falling only in the east, the western villages would go so far as to steal and kill a few pigs from the other group. But they would do it secretly: partly because they would never dream of attacking the 'strong' eastern section openly, and partly because the partial failure of the rains is in this case attributed to witchcraft and individual ill will, and not, as it were, to a neglect of the collective magic duty.

To-day, the chief is attempting to overcome this mutual suspicion by making the rain ritual a communal concern and requesting pigs for his sacrifice from every locality, in both sections. He has not yet succeeded completely; some time ago a man from one of the eastern villages refused to contribute to this communal sacrifice, which, he felt, did not concern him. On one of my visits to Tullishi, when I was in the company of the District Commissioner, I found two villages, Karlenya and Lau, engaged in a violent fight with sticks and spears, and guns held in readiness, the eastern village accusing the western, in traditional fashion, of having stolen the rain. The people of Karlenya had merely intended (so they said) to go down to the fields of Lau and walk round them in a peaceful procession, to capture the fickle rain which had for days fallen only over Lau. For this innocuous, though unorthodox, procedure they obtained the permission of the chief. But Lau did not trust this new spirit, and halted the procession by force of arms: which was proof, in the eyes of Karlenya, that Lau meant to keep the rain. We managed to stop the fight, and referred the matter to the chief and court for a more peaceful settlement.[1]

[1] It became the first task of the then newly appointed tribal court.

The question of guilt was never in doubt: true, the men of Lau first tried to deny the accusation; the evidence of the rainfall, however, could not be denied, and they admitted finally that some of them might, after all, unknown to others, have thought of 'stealing the rain'. They agreed to sacrifice a fowl first, and, if this proved insufficient, a large pig. Chief and court gave them one day's grace, during which everyone anxiously scanned the sky. The Karlenya people were frankly dubious about the effects of so niggardly a sacrifice. However, clouds gathered soon, and the rain seemed assured. We left, for no magic reason, before the imminent downpour.

The Tribal Code

Notwithstanding the ancient institution of chieftainship, then, the law of Tullishi is one of self-help. The prerogative of the chief to the use of force—the essential feature of centralized political authority—is absent. Indeed, the group submitting to common chieftainship does not yet fully submit to a 'common law', and is not yet fully welded into a political unit. Split in two, it admits different standards for its segments, and accepts within itself that state of lawlessness which normally separates groups claiming political independence.

I have already spoken of the place of adultery and seduction in the traditional tribal code and of the severe measures of self-help which often followed upon these crimes. Yet these measures, though allowed for, were not fully countenanced. If the older men of the families concerned were aware of the husband's intention, they would do their best to dissuade him and make him agree to the peaceful solution of divorce. The killing of a paramour in revenge provoked blood feud, like other forms of homicide. Only the killing of one's wife called for no punishment—'for is she not your wife?' The husband could not claim a refund of bride-price for the wife who died by his hand. Perhaps this supposition is rather ridiculous: at least, my informants thought it that when I put the question. 'What?' they laughed, 'do you want both wife and bride-price?'

In theft, if the thief is known, the owner of the property would attempt to recover it by force or to seize the equivalent—say, the same number of goats—from the possessions of the thief. Other litigations about property, about bride-price payments or inheritance, are settled by arbitration between the families.

Homicide in the family or clan is outside human punishment. This impunity applies to the clan at large, and excludes, in sub-divided clans, revenge between sub-clans. The people do not conceive of any supernatural sanctions, at least of the deed itself. When discussing this type of crime, my informants fell to talking about homicide committed by imbeciles or deaf people, which are equally exempt from punishment, as if the clan-crime and a crime committed by persons not responsible for their actions were the same thing. The sanctions are indirect; for

the general avoidances imposed upon clans between which there has been unavenged killing come in force also in this unavengeable crime: but here they are valid for ever; they apply to families and individuals, and isolate and ostracize the culprit eternally in his group. To disregard these avoidances means to court leprosy. Mostly criminals of this kind choose to emigrate to another tribe. I met a man who had killed his mother-brother in drink; he served a prison sentence of fifteen years in Port Sudan and afterwards returned to Tullishi, where he is now living quite happily. But he cannot eat or drink, or even sit with members of his clan. He did not emigrate: but, my informants explained, being a medicine-man by profession, he is rarely at home and spends most of his time travelling.

Homicide between clans calls for revenge and exact retaliation: for a young person another young person has to be killed, though sex could be ignored. Often more people are killed in the pursuit of the revenge, in which case the blood feud would be carried on, possibly for years, till the number of victims on both sides is squared. The men charged with the duty of revenge would seek their quarry in his house, or would ambush him on his way to the farms, armed with spears, knives, and guns. The avengers must be either full brothers or sister-sons, and they would find their victim among the same relations in the murderer's family. If his brothers are too old, and his sister-sons too young to be eligible for the revenge, one waits till the latter have reached the age of the victim when he was killed. When the revenge has been achieved, the blood feud lapses, entailing no rites of expiation or reconciliation. Till then, the two clans must not eat or drink or sit together, at the penalty of leprosy. In sub-divided clans, as mentioned already, these avoidances seem to concern only the sub-clans of the culprit and his victim. Needless to say, the families of the two will avoid each other where they can, lest their meeting kindled the blood feud anew. There is also a strong feeling that it is indecent and shameful for a member of the family or clan of the offender to come face to face with men from the victim's group, as if nothing had happened, and as if to mock the would-be avengers. This artificial barrier in a closely coherent community, the virtual exclusion of the two groups from communal life, act as the social pressure behind the urge of revenge.

No distinction is made between intentional and accidental killing. Mere wounding, even if it permanently crippled the victim of the assault, entails no thought of retaliation or revenge. If occasionally the family of the victim felt tempted to seek retaliation, it would do so unsupported by public opinion.

Killing between Tullishi and other tribes used to come under the heading of legitimate warfare. No inter-tribal pacts existed which would outlaw these attacks or provide a machinery procuring redress or expiation. Killing between the two divisions of Tullishi, arising from feuds over rain, occupied an intermediate position: it was 'legitimate' in so far as the

method of the assault was calculated to preclude revenge; yet the admission that it was so calculated also expresses the awareness of the unlawful nature of the action.

Accusations of witchcraft are frequent. Witchcraft in Tullishi differs fundamentally from that known in other Nuba tribes. It has no moral justification—save that mythical conception of an innate rivalry and enmity between the dual divisions. It is not, or not necessarily, an instrument of magic revenge against individuals who must be guilty of a hostile action, but an irrational, evil force. A less sinister form causes the crops to fail or animals to fall sick; the severe, fatal type destroys human life. If the relatives of a person who died of some mysterious illness are certain that witchcraft is the cause, they would seek revenge as in ordinary homicide. Dreams, in which one would see the witch who committed the crime, supply the evidence on which one acts. But not everyone has this gift of true dreams. Failing that, one resorts to an ordeal. If you suspect a man of having bewitched your crops or cattle, you will demand that he perform the sacrifice of a fowl to God: if innocent, no harm will befall him; if guilty, he will become blind.

It is interesting that people accused of witchcraft would admit the crime if they had cause to revenge themselves on their alleged victim. The action of witchcraft is so mysterious, and the persuasion of the tribal dualism so fanatical, that anyone filled with hatred against some person in the opposite tribal section, among the predestined enemies of his group, might imagine himself in the role of a witch. The following case happened in 1934. The wife of a certain Kokwa of Karlenya had died mysteriously. It was revealed to her husband in a dream that another Kokwa, of Terdi, had caused her death by witchcraft. He collected his relatives and marched across to Terdi to kill the murderer. The chief learned of this and stopped them. Kokwa-Karlenya renewed his accusation before the chief, and the accused, when summoned, frankly admitted that he had indeed bewitched the other man's wife: it was an act of revenge; for Kokwa-Karlenya had previously killed the sister-son of Kokwa-Terdi by witchcraft, which crime was again established on the evidence of dreams. The confessed sorcerer was sent to prison for four days (I have been unable to discover why exactly four days) and fined one bull. The original witchcraft action, now revenged, was not under discussion.

I have spoken of the traditional oath on the chief's spear by which alleged thieves can swear to their innocence. Formerly, too, the chief could see an unknown offender, or the whereabouts of property lost or stolen, in his dreams. This gift, all agreed, has sadly declined with the coming of the *Hakuma.* This surprising statement is substantiated as follows: the prophetic dreams of chiefs were primarily about wars and threatening attacks of other tribes. Thanks to the Government, all this has ceased, and with the need the supernatural protection, too,

disappeared.[1] A number of new ordeals, however, has come in. The oath on the chief's spear is now also invoked in cases of homicide and blood feud, to bind the warring families to refrain from revenge. In adultery and theft, the chief administers the oath on a Koran bought from an Arab *fiki*. Its effect is that of the strongest ordeal: in three cases which happened in recent years it is said to have caused the death of (presumed) perjurers. Lately some people have practised the cow's urine ordeal, described in a previous chapter, which they learned from the Arabs, in accusations of witchcraft. The chief, however, stopped this practice, for the rather incongruous reason that it represents an alien custom—'not of our ancestors'.

Modern Law and Administration

The history of Tullishi under the present Government has been an unhappy one. Frictions and political unrest only too often disturbed peaceful development. Twice they entailed punitive expeditions, and once the temporary forcible removal of the people from their fortress-like hill settlements to the open valley, where they were more accessible to disciplinary action. This state of unrest reflects the slow and uncertain acceptance of our modern conceptions of law and government. Law and order in Tullishi are still in a state of flux. Traditional self-help and the centralized authority with which the chief is now invested exist side by side; the dictates of revenge and the antagonism of the dual division clash with the new principle of political peace. Indeed, for every instance of the effectiveness of the modern system one could quote another, revealing the survival of the old ideas.

Divorce and matrimonial disputes are now taken to court as a matter of course. Yet there is also the case of that old woman who burned down the house of her brother when his widow refused to surrender it. Many litigations about inheritance are settled amicably in court; but in a dispute of this kind, between a man who claimed that he had bought his father's land and his father's sister-daughters who claimed it by right of inheritance (*see* p. 341), the decision of the court in favour of the women was rejected by the son; he was supported in his attitude by his own sister-sons, who were loath to lose their future patrimony, and the three men occupied the land by force, threatening open resistance if they were evicted. Murderers have been captured and brought to justice even when their crime was the unpunishable homicide in the clan. But the demands of revenge have not been silenced entirely. An old man whose sister-son had been killed in an affray attacked the sister-son of the murderer in a sudden flare-up of vindictiveness, although the murderer had been tried and duly sentenced. His motives were two: one was that he had heard the offender, whom he believed executed, was alive, his death sentence having been commuted to imprisonment; the other, that the murderer's sister-son had added

[1] Some men in Tullishi are said to have foretold the patrol of 1926. 'Pacification' was not then, evidently, quite complete.

insult to injury by passing close to him on the village path. The old man refused to admit that what he did was a crime: he disobeyed the summons of the chief, and his whole family and clan rallied to him when he resisted arrest and punishment. Eventually, all attempts to bring him to justice had to be abandoned, since they would have led to open rebellion. Again, men guilty of assault would flee and hide in the uninhabited parts of the hill, and no one could be found who would be prepared to pursue and capture them. The traditional idea that mere assault and wounding entail no revenge must contribute to this passivity of the people. Of their uncertain attitude towards witchcraft, and of the unchanged belief in the right of the eastern villages to punish the other half of the tribe for the theft of rain, I have already spoken.

If old sanctions have been outlawed, new sanctions have appeared, creating new problems of adjustment. Prison sentences, the enforced long absence from the hill where the people spend all their lives, are felt with a severity unusual in most tribes.[1] Nor can the people reconcile themselves to having their livestock seized in fines; the all-embracing viewpoint of kinship makes you see in the tribal policemen, not impartial agents of the law, but members of another clan or family who have come to take what is yours. Moreover, the chief introduced a type of fine which is quite unwarranted and which the people find unbearably severe. In the case of the widow who burned the house of her brother's wife, he seized some of her land in lieu of a fine, since she possessed no other property. The land was sold to the highest bidders, one of whom happened to be a sub-chief who sat on the court. The woman and her family protested: the woman offered to go to prison 'for ten years' rather than lose the land which she had inherited from her brother. I reminded the chief that it was against the spirit of tribal customs to seize land, which represents, not wealth, but the principal means of livelihood, and especially this woman's land, which was hers only in trust, for her young sons. Eventually I managed, with some difficulty, to have the sale cancelled and the land restored.

Finally, a new class of offences has emerged, born of the very failure of the society to submit to the demands of the new régime—offences of 'contempt of court'. Jealous of his authority, the chief imposes heavy fines on all who resist his summons or reject his decision. Some of the accusations of 'contempt of court' are unjust. It happens frequently that people from the eastern section refuse to appear before the chief's court in Terdi. True, they often do it because they suspect the court and dislike the manner in which they are treated: 'The chief does not listen to us', many men said, 'he shouts us down.' But in as many instances the refusal is due to the genuine fear of witchcraft. Mothers, for example, would never allow their sons, who may be wanted as witnesses or

[1] One of a number of young men who recently returned from prison went mad. A psycho-pathological predisposition was undoubtedly a contributory, and possibly the main cause, for the incidence of lunacy is very high in Tullishi.

defendants, to cross the sinister 'invisible boundary'. The chief and elders see in it all merely evidence of a refractory spirit. 'The people of Kurmedi,' they would exclaim, 'have no respect for the court: and women are worse than men.' Insecure as the chief's authority is, it is all the more sensitive to all slights, real or imaginary. A year or two ago the young men of Kurmedi 'played at soldiers': they dressed up in shirts to the sleeves of which they had affixed the chevrons of corporals and sergeants, and swaggered up and down the hill with guns and spears. An anxious sub-chief reported this 'breach of the peace' to the chief; the young men were arrested (not without a serious brawl), and sent to prison for nine months. I am quoting the version of the culprits themselves—the version of the chief and the Government police which had to intervene reads differently: but my evidence is insufficient to determine the rights and wrongs of the case.

The causes of this difficult and disturbed adjustment lie deep in the constitution of Tullishi society. Its rigid segmentation and its peculiar dual division must obstruct the evolution of centralized authority and unitary political control. It is no accident that all serious offenders, without exception, come from large, powerful clans, and that the major political disturbances always originate in the 'strong', traditionally overbearing, eastern section. Moreover, the tasks of modern government must test a weak institution like Tullishi chieftainship most severely. We have greatly strengthened it, morally as well as technically: the chief has now a small tribal police force largely armed with old Remingtons, and can call in emergencies on the Government police post at Lagawa, ten miles away. His position has also been strengthened indirectly by economic factors. His salary and the fines which he pockets assure him an income with which no one else can compete. It enables him to employ paid labour on his cotton plantations, and he thus became the first (and only) 'capitalist' employer in Tullishi. He is not yet the biggest cotton-producer; but the combined figures for his cotton and simsim production and for the cattle in which he invested a proportion of his profits, establish without doubt his rising economic importance.[1] There is evidence that more and more individuals find it in their interest, for economic reasons, to stand well with him.

Yet in this divided society the unique ascendancy of the chief might foster disruption rather than unity. Clearly, to strengthen his position

[1] These are the comparative figures for the last three years of farm produce and livestock of the chief and the five wealthiest men in Tullishi (*co.* means sacks of cotton; *s.*, basketfuls of simsim; *c.* head of cattle):

	1937		1938		1939		
	co.	*s.*	*co.*	*s.*	*co.*	*s.*	*c.*
A (Chief)	2	9	—	10	4	6	13
B (Grain priest) ..	5	4	3	1	6	2	2
C	3	½	2	2	6	½	3
D	4	1½	4	—	5	—	—
E	3	1½	4	—	1	2	—
F	4	½	3	—	2	2	1

is only half the solution. It must be supplemented by an adequate social machinery which would do justice to the sectional structure of the tribe.

No such machinery existed when I first came to Tullishi. In the local government the sectional structure was recognized only in so far as it referred to localities. Each village elected its sub-chief or sub-chiefs, known by the Arabic title of *Omda*. Clans, and the dual division, were represented only incidentally, through *Omdas* who happened to belong to different clans, and to the eastern or western section respectively. In the western section three large clans were not even incidentally represented, in the eastern section, four large clans and sub-clans. It seems imperative that the sub-chiefs should represent every important clan or sub-clan in the various villages. A merely incidental representation, even if it were complete, is insufficient: the people must consciously elect their *Omdas* or elders as representatives both of localities and clans. Thus sub-chiefs and elders could exercise pressure upon their clansfellows in the many instances in which clan loyalty and clan responsibility play a part—that is, in all more serious disputes and crimes. The demand for self-help of kinship groups, hitherto obstructing the course of justice, would be canalized, and utilized, through the clan representatives on the court, who would be in a position to speak on behalf of their group members and safeguard their interests.

There remains the problem of the dual division. A twin chieftainship is for many reasons inadvisable. The person of the Great Grain Priest in the eastern section, who is the counterpart of the chief in the west, offers the logical solution. He should be invested with the powers of a deputy of the chief beyond the 'invisible boundary', and there hold his own sub-court, assisted by the local sub-chiefs, in all cases concerning his group. I may add that, like the chief, he possesses a sacred spear on which oaths can be taken: so that even the paraphernalia of the law exist in duplicate. Among the old men who act as sub-chiefs or elders, one can easily be found who has bonds with both sections and could thus act as the connecting link between the two tribal courts.

In co-operation with the District Commissioner, a reorganization of the tribal government on these lines was worked out and suggested to the people. (I had made preliminary inquiries and tentatively tested the projected reforms during previous visits.) We convoked a tribal gathering which was to examine our proposals. The dual court was accepted with great satisfaction and, in fact, soon showed a promising efficiency. The village Karlenya, true to its isolated position in the eastern section (*see* p. 324), preferred to ally itself with the western villages. The principle of clan representatives, too, was welcomed, though their actual election proved somewhat difficult. Several men who were elected by common consent declined. They feared the commitments of the office. They said: 'Now the Government will expect us to produce offenders and bring them to justice; if we are unable to do it, we shall perhaps be sent to prison.' But this and similar misunderstandings were quickly cleared

up, and eventually we obtained what appeared to be a truly representative court, to which the people had elected all their most respected men, among others, their grain priest and 'king-makers'. Certain major administrative reforms still remain to be carried out: the abolishment of the practice that the chief pockets the fines, and a better definition of the role of Government and tribal police.[1] It will, besides, be some time till the new machinery is working smoothly. It is merely a machinery: its creation does not in itself eliminate the deep-rooted internal frictions or the conflict between traditional and modern conceptions of right and wrong. The District Commissioner with whom I collaborated was somewhat dubious about the prospects of our reforms; my own expectations are more sanguine.[2]

In conclusion, we must ask ourselves how the sacred character of Tullishi chieftainship fits, or will fit, into the changing picture of tribal organization. The rising employer of labour, and the vessel of mystic powers, seem to have little in common. The spiritual and secular aspects of chieftainship appear indeed to be growing apart. The sacredness of the office and its mystic background seem unchanged. Yet the individual in which it is embodied has become humanized. As a person, the chief is judged more and more by human standards. The two aspects still overlay each other and blur the judgement. Let me quote two telling examples.

During one of my visits to Tullishi the chief requested that I should divorce him from his senior wife, who, jealous of a young co-wife, had refused to cook for her husband and share his meals. I had to disabuse the chief, first of all, of my powers, or those of any Government official. But as man to man, I advised him to seek reconciliation. It could not be right, I ventured, that a chief, the arbiter of public morality, should divorce his senior wife for what was, after all, a paltry reason. This was very tentative reasoning: the sacredness of Tullishi chieftainship gave no clue as to the appropriate standard of conduct in difficulties of so pronounced human order. But the old men of the tribe, who had all appeared to witness this discussion, at once agreed with me. To divorce his senior wife would undoubtedly harm the chief's reputation. The

[1] As a minor improvement, I suggested the abolishment of the alien title *Omda*, and the adoption instead of the title *kyora ma kudi*, Master of the Village.

[2] Since this was written the hill has again been in uproar, and the Government decided on a step which my previous efforts had succeeded in staying—a punitive expedition, and the forcible evacuation of the tribe from its mountain fortress to the plain. This recipe has proved its effectiveness elsewhere in the Nuba Mountains, and the people of Tullishi will probably be no exception. Yet I stand by what I said. After I left Tullishi, the people kept the peace for two years. I am certain that this state of affairs would have continued and military intervention proved unnecessary if the political reforms had been carefully nursed and guided. The exigencies of the war, shortage of personnel, prevented this. But let me repeat—the political reforms only created a new machinery: and new machines must be watched, cared for and, occasionally, corrected. Colonial rule through native institutions is stultified unless it envisages gradual (and guided) readjustment. But of this I shall speak more fully in the final chapter of this book.

chief and his wife promised to think it over. The next day they came back to announce happily that they had made it up, and I had (so I was assured) saved the honour of Tullishi chieftainship.

The other instance is this: A young tribal policeman had committed adultery with the chief's wife (another one). This crime occupied the court for many days, but no decision could be reached. An offence of this kind, the old men admitted, was unprecedented. They were frankly puzzled. In offences against the sacred rights of the chief, the situation was clear: they were sanctioned by supernatural intervention. But in this encroachment of human considerations tribal culture gave them no guidance.

Conclusion

From our description Tullishi society emerged fraught with tension and conflict. They centre in the antagonism of patrilineal and matrilineal affiliation, in that exacting and uneasy balance which, as we put it, 'is felt as maladjustment'. The balance itself and the conflicts entailed in it are, of course, no new features. They must occur in any matrilineal system which admits paternal succession in vital and rival fields of social life. What is new, however, is the rigidity with which these fields are defined.

We remember that among the Korongo and Mesakin an optional change of residence of adolescents tends to circumvent the clash of interests between matrilineal clan and patrilineal living unit. There also the localities, to which individuals are bound by patrilineal descent, are loosely organized: villages move, split, are abandoned or newly founded. They represent fluid and transient groups, in no way comparable to the firm alignment of clans.

In Tullishi the number of villages is fixed and conceived of as existing in all eternity. They possess as such ritual offices, magic faculties, or distinctive observances (e.g. circumcision). More rigid still, the dual division appears as a predestined order, determining character and fate of the individual born into it.

In Tullishi, then, the two systems of affiliation are juxtaposed in almost exact equivalence. I said almost; for the final logical link, the conception of the local section as one defined (like the clan) by common descent, is missing. It might be said to be latent and unconscious in the sense that it is implicit in the myth of origin. Though the myth speaks only of the children sprung from the primordial man and woman as having chosen allegiance to one or the other, there is the implication that the males among the children became the ancestors of the (undefined) patrilineal lineages now dispersed over the localities.

To return to our problem. Are there, we might ask, trends visible which would show that the society is attempting to overcome the rigid structural balance and the maladjustment flowing from it? We have met which certain features of this nature. We have noted that, under the

impact of new influences, the system of land inheritance is changing and giving greater weight to patrilineal succession. Once more under the influence of new factors the rigidity of the local division is lessening. Men have recently moved from the villages where previous generations had lived without break; and adolescents in localities where circumcision is *tabu* have adopted this observance without fear of magic retribution.

These seem *ad hoc* readjustments, reflecting no consistent trend. On the contrary, they seem contradictory as they both strengthen and weaken patrilineal importance. But this inconsistency disappears on closer examination. What is strengthened is the narrow patrilineal lineage; what is weakened is the wider bond of locality, which is only indirectly determined by patrilineal descent. The former change is at the expense of the matrilineal kin group; the latter, to the gain of the clan.

Thus the balance is being re-set on two planes: friction between the narrow kinship groups is being eliminated; and the clan gains strength as the local segment loses its rigid, pre-ordained autonomy. An uneasy balance is being replaced by a more workable disequilibrium. The potential perfection of the balance, foreshadowed in the myth of origin, is not to become reality.

As yet these changes are small and indecisive. Nor do they touch upon the dual division of the tribe. I do not think that the latter process is likely to occur—unless the society itself dissolves or loses its identity. For the dual division epitomizes, not only the concrete conflicts arising from the double kinship affiliation, but the antagonism of male and female principle. It will survive as long as patrilineal and matrilineal alignment coexist; indeed, its validity is more lasting and fundamental than that of the structural dichotomy.

CHAPTER X

KOALIB, NYIMA, DILLING

People and Country

IN the following we shall examine three groups of widely different culture, yet sharing the basic principle of their religious systems—the shamanistic conception of spirit possession. The three tribes speak completely different languages. One group, Dilling, is also racially distinct.[1] Geographically, all three are comparatively close neighbours, and have known even closer contacts in past migrations. Two groups, Dilling and Nyima, have long maintained intimate social relations.

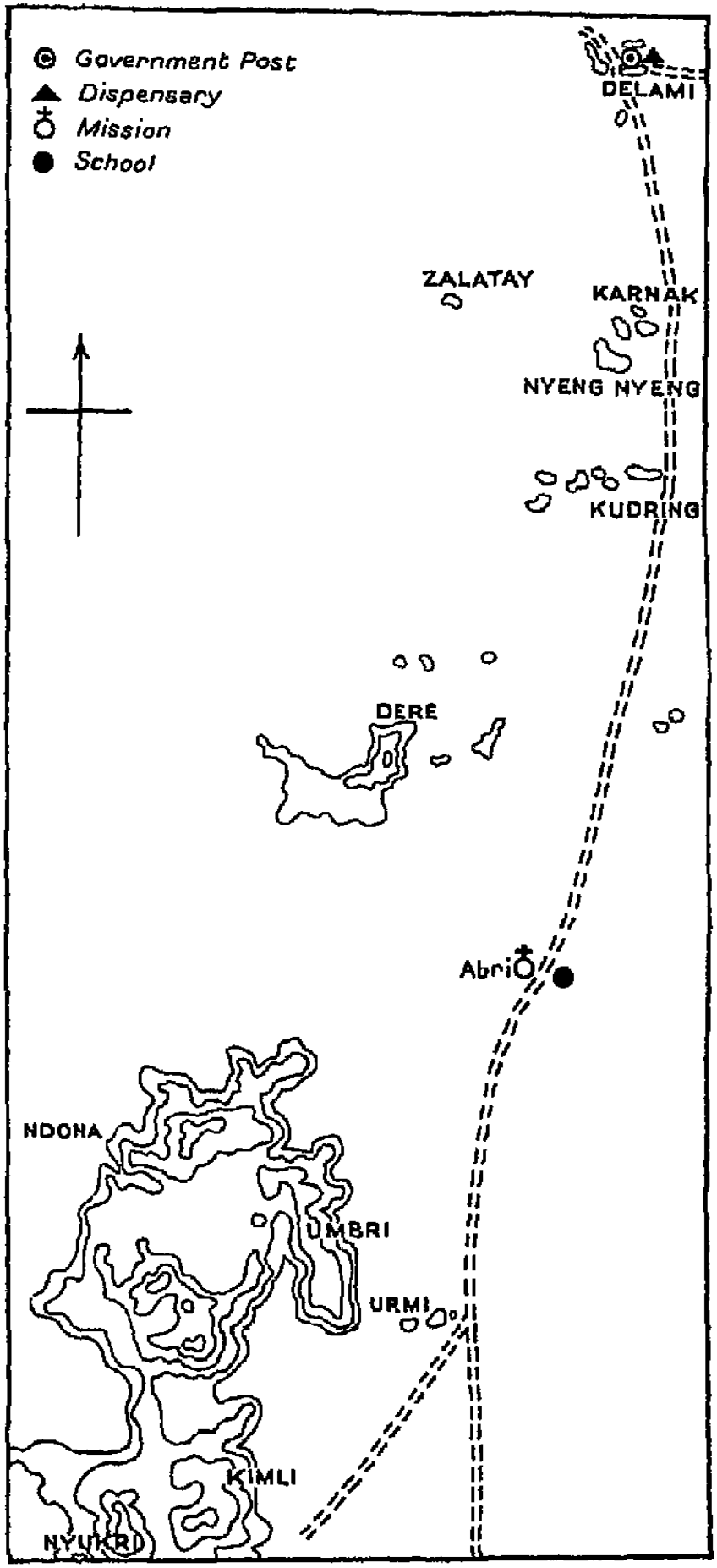
The name 'Koalib', of uncertain origin, is only used by the Arabs. The people of this tribe call themselves Lgálege, by which name they are also known to their Nuba neighbours. The Koalib number about 20,000. They are divided in two groups, between which there are small dialectical differences: a southern group, inhabiting the high massifs of Jebel Nyukr, Jebel Umbre, and Delami Meyl; and a northern group, in the low, broken hill country round Delami. This description will be concerned only with the northern group. According to a tradition which I recorded in Delami, the northern Koalib lived originally in Kortala, side by side with another tribe, which they know as Nyemu, and which is said to be related to the Nuba of Jebel Deir. Arab (?) pressure drove the Nyemu to Jebel Deir, and some of the Koalib to their present habitat. The ancient ethnic link with Kortala survived in the form of a pact of friendship which entails the outlawing of intertribal wars and the obligation of blood money between Koalib and Kortala.[2]

There is also evidence of certain ethnic cross-currents. Thus, according to another tradition, the people of Delami lived first on Nyeng-Nyeng hill, some five miles to the south; and the people of Kudring, another hill in the northern Koalib, are said to have come from Jebel Tau and Kabra, south-west of Rashad. The northern Koalib inhabit six hills or hill groups: Delami, Kudring, Karnak, Dere, Lgondang, and Andona. During the last six or seven years considerable new migrations have taken place, many people having moved from their hills far out into the fertile plain, where they took up new land for cultivation and built new settlements. People from the southern Koalib have moved deep into

[1] The physical difference is most striking, even on first sight: the Dilling people are long-headed; they have long and narrow faces, with high cheek-bones and retreating forehead; they are thin and slender of build, and their features, non-negroid, are suggestive of a clear Hamitic strain. I am speaking here of what appears to be the 'pure' Dilling type, and not of the, very numerous, 'mixed' types.

[2] The tradition assumes that people of Koalib stock are still living in Kortala. I have found no traces of this in Kortala, unless we identify the name of one section of the present inhabitants of that hill, known as Tekálko, with the tribal name of the Koalib, Lgálege (or Lkáleke).

KOALIB HILLS



Heiban and Laro country. Delami, once a large community, has lost more than half of its population to these new colonies; a considerable proportion moved to the large Arab settlement of Umm Berumbeta. It is interesting to note that when people from Delami recently settled in Terter (which they call Nworom) in the uninhabited plain, they found traces of former occupation: small knives and potsherds. They have no memory of previous inhabitants, but the old men recognized the objects which were discovered as the handiwork of the Kortala people.

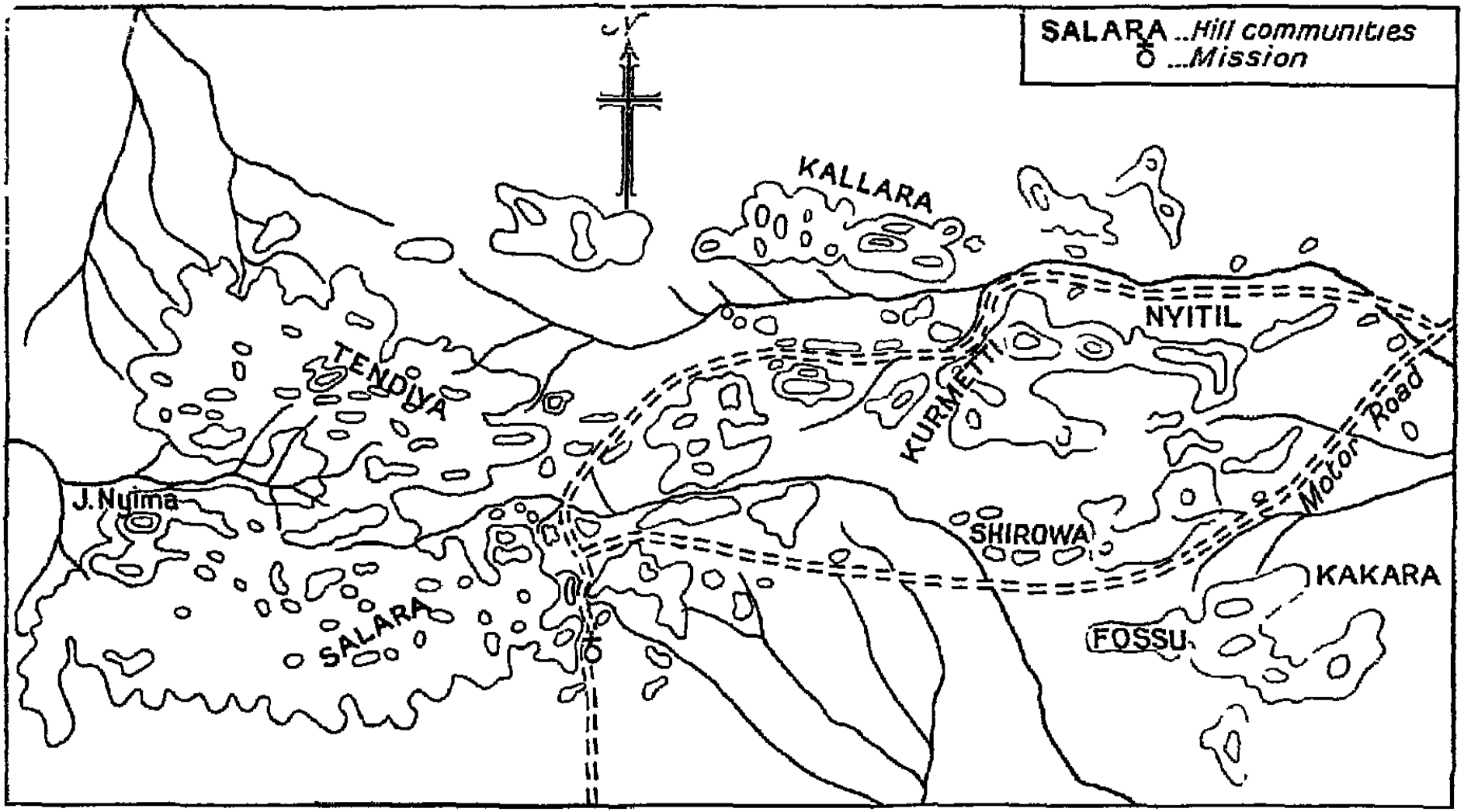
About twenty miles north-west of Delami lies Kortala and the Kodoro massif (Kaduru, as the Arabs call it). We will mention it here only as an outpost of Dilling culture and thus a geographical link between Koalib and Dilling. The people of Kaduru speak the language of Dilling (with minor dialectical differences); their ethnic descent is dubious, and certainly not uniform; but one section claims identical origin with Dilling—from the ancient kingdom of Ghadayat, south of El Obeid.

Sixty miles west of Delami the rocks of Dilling rise abruptly from the plain. The people who inhabit the area call themselves Warke, and the rocks *Warken kurin*, 'Warke hills'. The Warke—or Dilling people, as we propose to call them—have a population of 7,000–8,000. They have preserved very clear traditions of their origin and past history. Originally, these traditions state, the tribe was living at Abdel Baka, in the Ghadayat, under the 'Sultans' of that Kingdom. The Ghadayat are said to have been of Fung origin, and ethnically related to the Warke. Later, Arab attacks forced the latter to emigrate.[1] They moved first to Boti (now known as Sungikai), then to Shirma, or Jebel Tukuma (ten miles east of Dilling), and finally to Dilling. The Ghadayat, in their old home, are said to have become 'like Arabs', while the Warke 'became Nuba'. The ancient link, however, survived in the political sphere; the Dilling people remained tributary to the Sultans of Abdel Baka and still recognize, symbolically, their suzerainty. Every newly appointed chief of Dilling must travel to that place to undergo the ritual hair shaving which forms part of the coronation ceremonial and to receive, at the hand of the Sultan of Abdel Baka, certain gifts symbolic of his accession. The genealogy of Dilling chiefs mentions ten who already resided in Dilling. Their relationship is not remembered, but we may assume that their reign embraces a period of no less, and probably more, than 100 years.

The Dilling people know of their close cultural and linguistic links with Kaduru and Ghulfan, but the traditions of the origin of these links are uncertain. The most widely accepted tradition is this: that the people of Kaduru have lived together with the Warke in the Ghadayat, but later separated; that the Ghulfan groups are of Fung origin, but unknown home; and that a small, isolated group, akin to Dilling in language and culture, and living to-day on Jebel Tabak in Western

[1] The tradition does not speak of 'Arabs', but of the 'Turks of the time', which means merely the conquering race of that era.

NYIMA HILLS


SALARA ..Hill communities
...Mission
KALLARA
NYITIL
KURMETTI
TENDIYA
Motor Road
J.Nyima
SHIROWA
KAKARA
SALARA
FOSSU

Kordofan, had shared with the Warke their old home on Jebel Takuma, but afterwards migrated to its present habitat.

The list of Dilling clans reveals that some sections of the tribe are of alien origin—groups of immigrants from Ghulfan and other places, which were incorporated into Dilling society under the social identity of separate clans. One stretch of land in Dilling—the locality in which the chief resides—is called Kelan, which is also the name of a Nyima clan. If members of that clan happened to be in Dilling during the performance of the great tribal ceremonies, they would be entitled and expected to attend, and *vice versa*. The people have no explanation for this custom.

Between Dilling and two Nyima communities, Nyitil and Kurmetti, there existed political understanding and friendship. Nyitil and Kurmetti were tributary to Dilling, in the same fashion as Dilling was to the Ghadayat. The three communities maintained peace (while Dilling and other Nyima hills were at war); they helped each other in times of famine, and during the Mahdist raids the people of Dilling found protection in these Nyima hills. Dilling and Nyitil are linked even more closely, and co-operate in certain vital rituals, such as fertility rites or the consecration of the Dilling 'High Priests'. Recently a large number of people from these 'friendly' groups settled in the plain between Nyitil and Dilling, on Dilling land, with the consent of the Dilling landlords. The friendship between these groups has not, however, led to intermarriage.

The Nyima, finally, are the largest of the three groups, with a population of 37,000. They call themselves *Ama*, which means simply 'people', or—if they want to be more explicit—*ama mede kolat*, 'People of the Seven Hills'.[1] The 'Seven Hills' are a loose massif of much-broken ridges and single rocks, whose eastern flank drops into the plain five miles west of Dilling. These are the names of the Seven Hills: Salara, Twana (known as Tendiya to the Arabs), Kodoŋol (or Kurmetti), Ngitil (or Nyitil), Fageni (or Fossu), Kallara, and Kakara. Occasionally one speaks of 'Seven Hills and a half'; the 'half-hill' is Shirowa, a small settlement between low hills roughly in the centre of Nyima country, and the residence of the *Shirra*, the 'Sultan' and rain-maker of the tribe.

The Nyima, even more than the Dilling people, have a strong sense of history and tradition. They can trace their genealogies, and the genealogies of their clans, from twelve to fifteen generations back. At that time the tribe is said to have occupied its present domicile, having migrated there from a country 'in the west', 'beyond Tima and Abu Ginuk', whose name is given as Kugya.[2] The immigrants seem to have settled first in the eastern hills, Nyitil, Kurmetti, and Fossu, which they found unoccupied. Later they pushed towards the west. At Salara they

[1] Nyima or Nyimaŋ is the name of the highest peak in the ridge which forms the western flank of the hill massif. A landmark to the Arabs, it seems to have suggested to them a tribal name for the inhabitants of the hills behind it.

[2] This may well have been the Kugya in El Odeya district.

clashed with the Kunit, whom they found in possession of the hill, and drove them north after heavy fighting. One large Nyima clan, Kurmede, the clan of the rain-maker, rejects for itself this tradition of an ancient immigration, claiming a loftier origin: the ancestors of this clan are said to have descended from the sky, and on the top of Nyitil hill the people will show you footprints in the solid rock made, so they say, by the men and beasts of Kurmede when they dropped upon the earth.

The relations of the Nyima with the surrounding tribes were mostly hostile, leading to constant wars and raids. But we shall also see that sections of the Nyima bound themselves by peace treaties and pacts of blood brothership to some of the neighbouring groups, Nuba as well as Arab. Traditions, too, elaborate the existence, in ancient times, of peaceful relations between the tribes. There is, for example, the story of the great friendship of a chief of Nyima with a chief of Ghulfan; to this friendship, it is said, the Nyima owe one of their most vital institutions, circumcision, which their ancestor-chief observed in Ghulfan and brought to his own country.

All three tribes are, in their fashion, conscious of their tribal and ethnic individuality. This consciousness differs less in its clearness than in the nature of the conceptions of which it is built. The Koalib, sub-divided, widely scattered, and always prepared for new migrations, do not lose their tribal consciousness in new surroundings; it does not need the substratum of a permanent habitat. The emigrant groups carry their culture and tribal consciousness with them: I have seen them perform their tribal rites and practise their marriage customs in the middle of Heiban and Laro country; in Umm Berumbeta, where they cultivate side by side with Arabs and close to the Government experimental farms, they have kept their priestly experts for grain and simsim. Nor is their tribal identity exclusive in the sense that it forbids intermarriage with their new neighbours.

In Dilling the smallness of the tribe and the knowledge that, culturally, it represents only one of several sections does not detract from the strong consciousness of ethnic individuality. The proximity of Dilling town, an artificial creation, with its fort, its police barracks, its Arab shops, and its haphazardly mixed population, provides the strongest test imaginable of tribal consciousness. This neighbourhood, now over a generation old, has of necessity influenced the material conditions and the social contacts of the Dilling tribe. Yet it has hardly affected its ethnic identity or exclusiveness. If anything, it has strengthened them. There has been little intermarriage, and little or no weakening of culture. This consciousness of tribal identity rests less on historical traditions than on the peculiar structure of the society, of the type which I have described as symbiotic: it turns the group into a unique configuration of segments, all interdependent, unthinkable without each other, and unthinkable also outside this union from which they derive their *raison d'être*.

The tribal consciousness of the Nyima, equally strong, is once more of a different order. Their social structure precludes the intensive unity of Dilling. Indeed, in war and peace the different hills of Nyima went their own different ways. Their unity is, above all, conceptual, and rests on the knowledge that their culture, common to the tribe, distinguishes it fundamentally from all other groups. Regardless of pacts of friendship and blood brothership, there is hardly any intermarriage with other tribes.[1] Also Nyima culture is bound up with the physical surroundings: the religious rites of the tribe, the age-grade organization, are fraught with local associations which forbid transplanting from the Nyima hills. The men of Nyima, though constantly leaving their hills for labour or soldiering, invariably feel the urge to return—for good, or at least temporarily, from time to time, to attend this or that tribal ceremony.

In all three tribes the possession of the shaman cult enters importantly into the conception of tribal identity. Now Koalib, through Kortala, is linked with Dilling; Dilling, through Nyitil, with the rest of Nyima. Whether this twofold contact in fact explains the possession of the common trait, we cannot say. That it might explain it, is certain. For the short and recent contacts between Koalib and Heiban and Laro have already led to the spreading of the shaman cult (i.e. its Koalib version) to these other tribes (*see* pp. 157, 164).

(1) *Koalib: Settlement and Homestead*

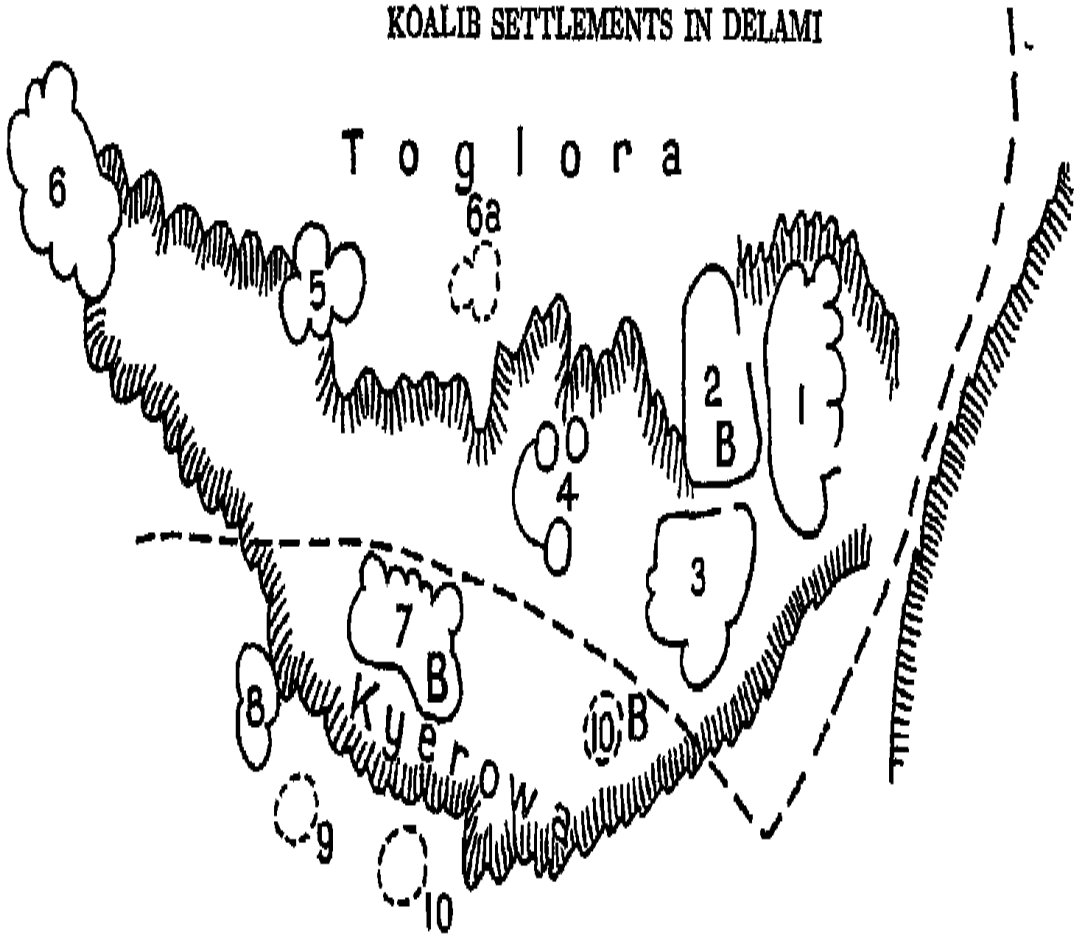
In the broken hill country of northern Koalib the hill communities are widely scattered, as are the rocks and hillocks to which they cling. The single community consists of a number of hamlets, again loosely scattered, but each a close cluster of homesteads, hugging the walls of a rock, or climbing up low, narrow ridges. Delami, for example, comprises nine such hamlets, all in a radius of perhaps half a mile; Dere, another large community (as Koalib communities go) numbers five hamlets, which keep a slightly greater distance. The hill communities and hamlets vary widely in size, mainly because they have been so unequally affected by emigration. The single hamlet in Delami has, to-day, one to four homesteads, but the number of deserted houses testifies to the former greater expansion.

Emigration has altered the whole constitution of many hill communities. The new settlements, four or five miles distant from the original community, are no longer local segments in the old sense: they still 'belong' to the original community, sharing with it its kinship groups (often you find families divided in half by emigration), and its priests and rituals, but rather as 'colonies' belong to a mother-settlement.[2] The old boundaries of hill communities have become obscured; for the distance between colony and mother-settlement may now be greater than between that settlement and the next, independent community.

[1] 'We do not marry into other tribes', informants said, 'because our customs are so different.'

[2] Such 'colonies' of Delami are Terter, Qardud, Tiyeban.

KOALIB SETTLEMENTS IN DELAMI



Compound deserted house boundary of settlement

B House of bayel (*spirit priest*)
Lgodron clan: 1, 2, 3, 5
Lgreger clan: 6
Leke clan: 4
Lgerowa clan: 7, 8, 10
Lgokene clan: 9

1 and 2 *classificatory brothers*

6a *abandoned homestead of* 6, *the people moved first to Terter, five years ago, and returned to present site two years ago.*

4 *half abandoned house, only one man left, all his brothers having moved to Terter. He shares this house with his senior wife, and has another house some distance away, in the plain, for his second wife.*

5 *house of an adopted brother (ex-slave) of* 1.

When colonies move still further afield, and when the old links of kinship and religious co-operation are finally severed, the new settlement becomes something quite new and unprecedented—an independent village somewhere out in the plain.

The Koalib homestead is a cluster of round mud-built huts which stand together in groups of two or three, each group half surrounded by a fence of grass and stalks. Tall granaries stand between the groups of huts. The pair or triangle of huts is called *karu*; the whole homestead, which may number five or six of these *karu* sections, is known as *karla*. The triangle of huts is the habitation of an individual family—man, wife, and unmarried children. The families in these small houses which, together, make up the homestead are all related: they are the families of brothers, fathers and sons, father-brothers and brother's sons, grandfathers and grandsons. In other words, the *karla* comprises a cross section of the male progeny of an individual family. Here we meet with a new domestic grouping which is, to my knowledge, unique in the Nuba Mountains—the 'extended family'. Its growth, infinite in theory, is limited by the facts of death and—to-day—emigration. Its boundaries are fluid, for birth and death add and subtract in irregular fashion. In each successive generation the biological relationship between the descendants must become more distant till eventually, after the third or fourth generation, it becomes untraceable. The kinship composition of an extended family at any given moment, and the proportion of biological and classificatory relations, are thus unpredictable. Let me illustrate this by a concrete example. The homestead of a certain Abdigen in Delami consisted of six small houses—*karu* (a seventh had been abandoned when its inhabitants emigrated to Umm Berumbeta). In house No. 1 the family head lives, Abdigen himself, with his wife and three young sons. No. 2 houses a classificatory brother of Abdigen, the exact relationship being no longer traceable. Nos. 3 and 4 belong to two (real) brothers who are Abdigen's classificatory brothers (his father-brother's sons). No. 5 is the house of another father-brother's son, and No. 6 the house of the latter's widowed mother.

Though kinship groups thus tend to stay together, this is not equally true of clans. Two or three neighbouring homesteads will often be occupied by people of the same clan. Possibly they represent offshoots of a single kinship group whose relationship became obscured in the course of time till only the (patrilineal) clan link survived. But on the whole clans are scattered irregularly.[1] In newly founded settlements the tendency of clan fellows to settle next to each other seems much stronger. In one of the new 'colonies' at Umm Berumbeta, for example, four of the five homesteads of which the settlement consists belong to people coming from the same clan.

[1] Sometimes a hamlet is known by the name of a clan represented there. But it would invariably include other clans as well. E.g. in the hamlet Kokene in Delami three of the five homesteads of which it consists belong to the Lgokene clan, from which it derives its name, and two to different clans.

Koalib: Clan

The Koalib name for clan is *kware*, which means 'tree' (cp. the identical Heiban term). The clans, patrilineal, do not seem numerous, nor very large. Emigration and the wide distribution of the tribe precluded the compilation of a comprehensive and exact list of clans. Let me only mention that, in Delami, I recorded ten different clans, Lgokene, Lgedr, Lgodrom, Lŋgodr, Lgandr, Logoban, Lgarna, Lgerowa, Lturdi, and Lgudura, and in Dere, four, Lŋelen, Lgailu, Lgodrom, and Logoban. Again, clans are not bound up with locality, the same clans appearing in different hill communities. There are certain exceptions. One clan, Lŋelen, the 'rain clan' of Koalib (*nelen* being the name for rain magic and rain-maker), exists only in two communities, Dere and Ndona. Other clans bear the name of hill communities in which they are strongly represented. Thus the largest clan of Karnak hill is called Lgarnak, of Kudring, Lgudriŋ. Which came first, local or clan name, I could not determine. The informants, in any case, maintained that so far as they could remember a single community always harboured three or four different clans. These clan names, incidentally, the 'local' names and the name for the rain clan, are the only names which can be identified etymologically.

To belong to the same clan means, to the people, to be descended from the same ancestor. But genealogies cannot be traced back to that founder of the clan, indeed they never go back further than three or four generations; nor is the mythical ancestor known by name.

The identity of the clan is upheld by eating avoidances between different clans and by certain observances symbolic of clan membership. The eating avoidance forbids members of different clans to eat meat together, meat eaten at the communal fertility and first-crop ceremonies, however, being exempted. Other kinds of food are innocuous in this respect. Disregard of the rule entails no sanctions.

A first symbolic clan observance takes the form of clan food *tabus*, referring to such animals as squirrel, jackal, fox, and dog. Only the eating is forbidden; the killing of the *tabu* animal entails no consequences. These *tabus* have no deeper significance: the animals to which they refer play no further part in the life of the clans. Nor are the *tabus* specific to single clans, two or three clans sharing the same tabu. The sanctions of the different *tabus* vary. Thus, in the case of the Lgokene and Lgodrom clans, which are forbidden to eat the flesh of squirrels, the breach of the rule means a wasting disease which ends fatally; in the case of the Lgerowa clan, for which fox and dog are *tabu*, the breach of the rule means blindness. The rain clan is an exception, possessing no food *tabus*.

Like the Heiban, Otoro and Tira, the Koalib initiate all important farming activities with a consecration rite (called *nolon*), at which they burn 'incense' over first-fruits or seed crops. The nature of this incense differs in different clans. But only three different materials are used in the whole tribe—the fat of he-goats, of rams, and gum from the gum tree.

I do not know whether the combination of these two series of clan observances suffices to furnish every clan with its specific mark of identity. The other elements in the familiar 'permutation' of clan observances which we discovered in the other tribes are missing in Koalib. Though both ritual numbers and the ritual direction are embodied in the ceremonies of the tribe, they are not utilized as clan symbols.

The Koalib clans are strictly exogamous—or were till very recently. As in all Nuba tribes the law of exogamy applies already to sexual relations which do not, and are not meant to, lead to marriage. One envisages no supernatural sanction; but if 'endogamous' sexual relations were discovered, the old men of the group would demand a goat and a fowl from the culprits in order to perform a purification sacrifice. Lately the rule has been somewhat relaxed, permitting marriage in the same clan provided man and wife come from different localities. It is possible that this change in traditional practice is a result of the recent population movements. The two endogamous marriages which I recorded in Delami were both between young people, and between Delami families on one side and emigrants to Umm Berumbeta on the other.

The clan finally shows its social effectiveness in the domain of law, implying the collective duty of blood feud and the usual eating avoidances, sanctioned by leprosy, between clans between which there has been killing. All the clan observances which we have enumerated apply to the 'theoretical' clan. The Koalib clan has no sub-divisions. But in the rules concerning blood feud the effectiveness of the clan is modified by the existence of the extended family as well as by the factor of locality. As we shall see the treatment of homicide varies according to whether it is committed in the same clan and the same 'homestead' and locality, or in the same clan and different 'homesteads', or, finally, in the same clan and different localities.

We have spoken above of the Koalib 'rain clan'. Although the whole clan is, by its name, associated with rain magic, this magic faculty is not vested in the clan as such, or shared by the clan members in virtue of their clan membership. The rain magic is vested in one kinship group in the clan and is transmitted from father to son, and generation to generation. No reason is discoverable why the whole clan should bear this name, unless it were this that a kinship group, the original master of this magic, grew in the course of time so large that it became transformed into a clan. Let me add that the religious organization of the tribe, its rituals and its priesthood, are completely independent of the clan system.

Koalib: Kindred

Like the clan, the kinship system of Koalib bears close affinity to that of other Nuba tribes, especially Heiban and Otoro. A glance at the kinship terminology proves this.

Kinship Terminology

Grandfather (pat. and mat.)	*bapa kobona* (lit. 'great father')
Grandmother (pat. and mat.)	*mma kobona* (lit. 'great mother')
Grandchild	descriptive ('child of my child')
Father	*bapa*
Mother and her co-wives	*mma*
Father-brother	like father
Father-sister	like mother
Mother-brother	*mam*
Mother-sister	like mother
Son, daughter	*torr, tinya*
Brother, sister (full)	*nyeneri*
Brother, sister (half)	*nyeneri* (*ko bapa*, i.e. of (one) father)
Father-brother's children Father-sister's children Mother-brother's children Mother-sister's children	like brother, sister
Brother's children	like own children
Sister's children	like mother-brother
Husband	*kurr*
Wife	*kuwa*
Wife's parents Husband's parents Son's wife Daughter's husband	*wada*
Brother's wife Sister's husband Wife's brother, sister Husband's brother, sister	*wayer*
Mother's clan (collectively)	*nolana*
Father's clan (collectively)	*kware*

The kinship terminology is dominated by the principle of the identification of brothers. The children of (biological) brothers or sisters are again brothers and sisters to each other, so that the brother relationship repeats itself, infinitely, in successive generations of agnatic relations. The generation above any one 'brother' generation represents 'fathers' or 'mothers' to that generation, and 'grandfathers' or 'grandmothers' to the next generation of descendants. The only new feature, compared with the kinship terminologies previously studied, is the disappearance of the reciprocal identification of grandparents and grandchildren. It is a direct expression of the new form of domestic grouping, in 'extended families'. For in this agglomeration of individual families in which all the descendants of an original family live together, the position of a family head falls to the men of the 'grandfather' generation. The actual head of the homestead, the oldest of these men, is always

known simply as 'grandfather'. This position of authority and (potential) group leadership forbids the intimate, playful relationship between oldest and youngest generation typical of other tribes; logically, the reciprocal terminological identification, which reflects this relationship, disappears also. It seems logical, too, that unlike all other Nuba tribes, the Koalib have different terms for grandfather and grandmother.

Etiquette between in-laws, of familiar pattern, forbids parents- and children-in-law to eat together or in front of each other; it also forbids that they should bathe together or wash in each other's sight (a prohibition never applied between strangers or other relations, of the same or opposite sex), which endorses our interpretation of the in-law *tabu* in terms of sexual shame.

In this society the most important kinship rights and obligations—adoption and education, the claims to physical and economic assistance, inheritance—all follow paternal descent. But matrilineal influences—that is, rights and obligations derived from maternal descent—are also strongly pronounced. They crystallize in the following rules and practices. Exogamy applies, not only to one's own (paternal) clan, but to the mother's clan as well. Indeed, the sanctions of this variant of clan exogamy are more marked, possibly because the chance of breaking this rule is greater than in clan exogamy proper. Men and women can never be ignorant of their own clan membership; but it might happen that a young man whose parents both died and who emigrated to some other part married there, from ignorance, a woman belonging to his maternal clan: all the children born of such a marriage would die, till the people would grow suspicious, investigate, and eventually dissolve the unnatural union. In marriage, the bride's mother-brother and other maternal relations can claim a share in the bride-price gifts. Every Koalib man can name a certain female relation of his own generation on the mother's side, on whom he depends for certain important ritual services. We have met with the same relationship in Heiban. The two relations call each other *konyara*; they exchange gifts at certain ritual occasions; and during the performance of the fertility rite of the 'filling of the granaries' they stage a mock theft and pursuit which is interpreted as a 'theft' of 'fertility' and dramatizes the ever-present, hidden antagonism between paternal and maternal kin (*see* p. 106). Moreover, when a Koalib man is initiated as possession priest, his *konyara* will sit with him during his ritual seclusion, feed and serve him, and be his companion all through the various rites through which he has to pass.

Again, new-born children are given the common 'mother's name', which ignores the role of the father in procreation. The mother is confined in her parents' house, to which she moves in the seventh or eighth month of her pregnancy. This strong emphasis on maternal importance in procreation is hardly offset by the weak traces of couvade which we find in Koalib. When the young mother returns to her husband's home a day or two after the birth, she must stay indoors for five days.

During this time her husband stays with her, in her hut, sharing with her in the tending of the infant. Yet there is no sanction and no conception of any evil befalling the child if its father disregarded this rule.

The position of the wife in this interplay of patrilineal and matrilineal factors clearly conforms to what I have called the 'incomplete adoption'. It is demonstrated in the conspicuous symbolism of the clan food *tabus*, which wives never share with their husbands. Nor is there a formal adoption of the wife into the husband's group. A seemingly related ceremony takes place during the first pregnancy of brides (in the fourth or fifth month) or, in the case of barren women, one or two years after marriage: but this ceremony, known as *anujina* (from *ujina*, the name of the ornamental apron worn by the Koalib women), has for its main motif the investment of the bride with this typical dress of the married woman, and thus expresses a change of status rather than of kinship affiliation. Significantly, the ceremony takes place in the bride's parents' house, and in the absence of the husband. As in Heiban and other tribes husband and wife are forbidden to eat meat together for some time after their marriage. In Koalib this avoidance is not lifted till the wife is nearing the menopause: the lapsing of the avoidance marks, not the adoption of a bride, but the cessation of physical wifehood.

The symbolism of non-adoption goes hand in hand with typical rules of conduct and legal conceptions. We find the same sweeping demands for the refund of bride-price in the case of barrenness or early death of a wife which, here as in Heiban, express the permanent, never severed link of the wife with her own kinship group. Moreover, the 'incomplete adoption' is borne out by the tendency of widows, young or old, to stay unmarried, regardless of the (theoretical) suggestion of levirate.

The kinship group, finally, can be extended by adoption and related practices. I need only say that the three types of incorporation which we described for Heiban also exist in Koalib: adoption of slaves (irrespective of tribal extraction);[1] adoption 'for the sake of bride-price'; and blood brothership, known here as *awri*.

Koalib: Marriage

The kinship terminology with its classificatory identifications proves as always a guide to marriage rules. Marriage between all relations who call each other father, mother, brother, or sister is forbidden. The marriage between a mother-brother and sister's daughter is, of course, forbidden in accordance with the double exogamy. A man may not marry two wives of the same clan; but two brothers are allowed to marry into the same clan, though not the same family (i.e. two 'sisters'). Most of these rules are identical with the marriage rules and prohibitions of

[1] The chief of Kudring for example, is an Arab ex-slave who had been adopted into a Koalib family. His 'brother-priest' with whom he, like all Koalib chiefs, co-operates is in reality a brother by adoption only.

Heiban and Otoro—with one striking exception: while in these other tribes a man must never marry a woman from his father's mother's clan, this kind of marriage is frequent in Koalib. The explanation must obviously lie in the different relationship between grandchildren and grandparents in the Koalib family; indeed, it follows from the kinship terminology and its classification of relationships. Once we accept the logical principle of this classification, it is easy to see that where grandparents and grandchildren are identified terminologically, as in Heiban and Otoro, marriage into the grandmother's clan must be tantamount to marriage into one's own clan; but where, as in Koalib, the grandmother relationship represents a separate relationship, peculiar to itself, the consistency of kinship classification no longer demands the prohibition of this marriage.

The occurrence of incest in the narrow sense, between close biological relations, is denied. The people speak of it as of some curious, little known phenomenon. Incest with classificatory brothers and sisters or mothers and fathers, however, is conceived of as possible. Actual marriage in the prohibited degree would always be prevented, but illicit sexual intercourse, or premarital sexual relations of this kind, do occur. The culprits would be beaten by their elders and warned not to see each other again. No further sanction, human or supernatural, is envisaged—at least, no direct sanction. But the man who committed incest, for example, with his classificatory 'sister' before she married must under no condition accept a share of her bride-price (though he might be normally entitled to it) or eat of the animals which the bride's father receives as part of her bride-price; if he did, his ears would wither. I have been told that there are men like this. Adultery in the kindred, say, with a brother's wife, is treated like ordinary adultery.

To-day all the different tribal sections of Koalib intermarry freely. Formerly intermarriage obtained only between the sections which were bound by blood money agreements—that is, by the acceptance of a 'common law' (*see* below, p. 468). The large majority of Koalib men have two wives, a smaller number have only one wife, or three or more wives. The girls marry extremely young, and the age difference between man and wife is as a rule considerable. Girls of nine or ten would already be betrothed, to young men of perhaps sixteen. When the girl is twelve or thirteen, the marriage is consummated; one waits neither for the first menstruation nor other signs of sexual maturity. All my informants admitted that miscarriage and still-birth of the first children were very frequent, and the strikingly low fertility rate in Koalib endorses this statement.

The young man who has found his ideal spouse will approach her father and ask for her hand. If the answer is favourable, the paternal uncles of the bride will visit the bridegroom's father a few days later to discuss and settle the details of the bride-price that is to be paid. As soon as the bridegroom makes the first payment, be it only a token

gift of one goat, the betrothal will be implemented, which means, the bride will move into the bridegroom's house, led there by her own brothers. In Koalib the girl-bride of nine or ten already joins her husband-to-be. She will still spend her days with her own people, working on the fields or in the house, and taking her meals with her parents. Every evening she returns to her new home, where she helps her future mother-in-law in housework and the preparation of food (of which she herself may not yet partake). Then, at night, she shares the hut and bed of her bridegroom. The two sleep together without consummation: before going to bed the girl removes her bangles and necklaces, but not her pubic apron, and her fiancé must be content with innocuous embraces and play with her breasts (such as they are in a girl of ten).

This preliminary connubium lasts for several years, till the bridegroom, without consulting either his or the girl's parents, decides that she is sufficiently mature for full consummation. No ceremony surrounds or heralds this crucial step, but many brides refuse themselves to their nearly-husbands until the bride-price payments have been completed. However, there seems to be no rule, for in many cases the marriage had been consummated while a large portion of the bride-price was still unpaid. After the consummation the bride ceases to divide her days between her own people and her husband's family; she now stays with her husband completely, but only for a fortnight or a month at a time, spending the same period afterwards with her own people. This alternate home life continues till the seventh or eighth month of pregnancy, when the bride goes back to her parents to stay with them till after the confinement.

Adult men who marry young girls are not very interested in the part of the marriage preceding consummation. They may allow their girl-brides to stay with their parents till they are sexually mature, or so considered by the husband. The betrothal practice is reduced to a mere allusion, to two nights which the girl-bride spends with her husband-to-be when he has made the first bride-price payment.

During the period of the betrothal the bridegroom pays the bride-price in several instalments. Their number and arrangement follows no rule. If the bride-price has not yet been paid in full before the consummation, it will mostly be completed when the wife has her first child. Occasionally the final payment may even be delayed until after that. But while this latter delay is mere tardiness (and can be taken to court), the waiting till pregnancy or the birth of the first child is fully legitimate and good sense as well. For if the marriage were to prove childless the husband could demand a reduction of the bride-price; in delaying the final payment till the issue is certain, the husband merely anticipates the possibility of such deductions—an attitude with which no father-in-law can quarrel.

The bride-price is called *kyor*, 'goats', and is paid in livestock—above all, goats and cows—and, to-day, guns. The value of the bride-price has

increased considerably in the last generation. Men who are now fifty or sixty married paying thirty goats and three cows; to-day the bride-price amounts to forty or fifty goats, two cows and one gun. Occasionally a money payment is substituted for the gun. In the bride-price are included two special gifts, the gift of one he-goat for the *amijina* ceremony mentioned above, and another gift called *kere*, which the husband makes to his wife's mother-brother and maternal relations when she has borne her first child.

When collecting the bride-price for his first bride, the bridegroom can count on financial assistance from his father, brothers, father-brothers, and mother-brothers. The bride-price is in turn distributed, in the bride's family, among her father, her brothers, real and classificatory, her father-brothers, and mother-brothers. The father receives only ten goats, and this is the only gift which the bridegroom actually presents to the recipients of the bride-price; the remaining payments are collected by the bride's relations themselves from the bridegroom's house. The largest share, the cows and the gun, goes to the bride's biological brothers—especially to those among them who are as yet unmarried and will soon need a bride-price for themselves. The other relations receive only one goat each.

This standard bride-price is reduced in the case of wives who prove barren; in the case of divorced women who, having been childless in their first marriage, marry again; in the case of widows who are no longer young and attractive, and who had several children already; and also in the case of brides who, for some reason, marry late—which seems again to detract from their sexual attraction. I recorded two such 'reduced' bride-price payments, one (in the case of a childless *divorcée*) amounting to twenty goats and three cows, and the other (in the case of an oldish, unattractive bride) to twenty goats and two cows.

The people explain the general rise in bride-price with the following three reasons: first, they would argue, there was the general lawlessness in pre-Government times, Arabs constantly raiding Koalib country and kidnapping Koalib girls. No one would pay a high bride-price when things were so insecure. (An interesting argument, this, running counter, as it does, to our ideas of supply and demand.) Secondly, the people are much better off to-day than they were of old, and can afford a high bride-price. And, thirdly, the bride-price has been driven up by the greater competition: unless one pays a high bride-price, an attractive girl would be snapped up by some other of her many admirers. The increased economic resources of the younger generation may indeed have intensified competition in this sense. But the most significant feature is the openly admitted motive behind this competition, which is one of appreciation, in the literal sense of the word, of sexual charms.

When the girl-bride joins her husband-to-be she brings with her a small dowry. It consists of a few pots and pans, one basketful each of grain and simsim, two basketfuls of flour, one gourd of beans, and the

fore half of a pig which her father slaughtered on that day, the hind half being consumed by the bride's family. The gifts are taken to the husband's house by the sisters and girl-friend of the bride who accompany her to her new home. These are presented by the bridegroom with counter gifts of fowls and tobacco. The bride's brothers, who lead the bridal procession, receive the present of a goat or pig, which they will kill on their way home and cook and eat by the wayside. Economically, then, the dowry is insignificant. Its essential meaning is that of an exchange of tokens without thought of gain, which is to symbolize the new kinship bond between the bride's and bridegroom's families (think of the halved pig) and to acknowledge, almost like an exchange of signatures, the marriage contract. Like the bride-price, the dowry defines the whole kinship group of the bride as one contracting party; for the gifts of grain and simsim are made up of contributions, of one gourdful each, by the brothers and other relations of the bride who may claim a share in her bride-price.

The first, contractual, aspect of the bride-price is thus clearly evidenced. The relations of the bride who, through sharing in the bride-price, become witnesses and guarantors of the marriage are witnesses and guarantors in the full moral and legal sense. They are financially responsible if the marriage proves a failure (as the people understand it) and have to guarantee the refund of the bride-price.

'Failure' of the marriage in this sense means, above all, barrenness. As in Heiban, fertility is the fundamental justification of marriage, and the bride-price is regarded quite conspicuously as a 'price' paid for the woman's fecundity. From this conception flow the various regulations concerning the refund of bride-price. If a wife dies childless, her husband can claim the refund of the bride-price, exclusive only of ten goats, which are allowed for the various sacrifices performed by the wife's father in the course of the preparations for betrothal and marriage. If the wife had borne sons, one cow is remitted for each son. If she had borne daughters, even one, the refund claim lapses, as her husband will receive a bride-price when the daughters marry. Every child born counts, regardless of whether it lived or died. In theory, the claim to the refund does not lapse in the course of time; I recorded the case of an old man of about sixty whose wife had died some years previously, having borne him only one son (who died), and who claimed the refund of the bride-price after her death. He had paid a bride-price of six cows and demanded back five. The wife's brothers, however, disputed his claim on the grounds that, having lived so long with his wife, he had forfeited the right to a refund. But all informants whom I consulted agreed about the justification of the claim.

In the remarriage of divorced wives or widows who remarry outside their late husbands' clan, the bride-price regulations express the same principle. If she had daughters, the woman's second marriage commands no bride-price; if she had borne sons in her first marriage, her second husband will pay the original bride-price minus one cow for

each son; if she had been childless, he must pay the full bride-price, but only if the childlessness is not attributed to barrenness—for in the latter case she will not be 'worth' a full bride-price. The bride-price for divorced wives is paid to the wife's father or brothers, who will then reimburse the first husband; the bride-price for widows, to that brother of her late husband who would normally have married her in levirate and who adopted the orphaned children.

In the remarriage of widows or *divorcées* the question of bride-price is affected, besides, by the viewpoint of sexual charm and attraction; as these diminish with age, the bride-price decreases. I have already given instances of this final aspect of the bride-price, as a payment made consciously for sexual possession and privileges. The early betrothal of Koalib girls is the strongest expression as well as safeguard of this possessive aspect of marriage. Though it does not exclude infidelity, it effectively protects virginity; it disposes of that constant watchfulness and tension which we noticed in other groups, and seems to check the emotional reactions of jealousy and vindictiveness. A man who discovered that his wife has a lover would occasionally fight his rival, in a stick duel; these fights never end fatally, nor do they bring the real decision. Moreover, only 'bad people' resort to fights—people whose 'heart is clean' would bring the case before the chief. Characteristically, the fight would be a purely individual duel in which the family of the husband—the guarantors of the marriage—would have no part. The final decision, after the fight, would always lie with the chief's court.

Koalib: Widowhood, Divorce, Inheritance

Widows may or may not remarry in levirate. No pressure is exercised, either personal or by public opinion. Only half-brothers or classificatory brothers of the deceased husband are eligible for levirate marriage, marriage with full brothers being regarded as incestuous. If the deceased left several widows, only one could remarry in levirate; the others would have to marry outside the family or clan. The one widow who would marry in levirate is chosen irrespective of age or seniority, but as a rule a widow who has small children is preferred to one who is childless, so that levirate marriage and the adoption of the orphans should go hand in hand. Widows who have grown-up sons rarely remarry, either in levirate or outside marriage, but live with their sons. If a widow with grown-up children married again, she would still stay on in her old house, where her new husband must visit her.

Very often even young widows, with small children, decline to marry again, staying with their children instead. It is understood, however, that they are free to have sexual relations with other men. These relations, though called relations 'by theft', are perfectly legitimate and respectable. Neither the widow's in-laws (with whom she is still sharing the house) nor her children would object. The explanation is significant: if the widow had children by her lover (or lovers) they would belong to her late husband's

family and would be 'brothers' or 'sisters' to her own children; 'why then', informants said, 'should we object?' The obsession with fecundity overrides the more narrow, possessive sex morality. In countenancing this posthumous infidelity, one recognizes one exception: this illegitimate union must never be with a man of the deceased husband's clan. The widow's potential levirate husband is thus excluded from the illicit relationship; nor may he anticipate a later marriage 'by theft'. He can win her only in legitimate marriage, or not at all. Clearly, since the children born of such union would in any case belong to the kinship group of the deceased and would not represent, as it were, a chance enrichment from outside, there can be no reason for sanctioning illegitimacy.

Immediately after the husband's death some widows, younger women especially, return for a spell to their parents' house, to remarry later or to go back to their home and children. Widows must wait one year till they can decently marry again. But illicit relations, again tacitly sanctioned, may be resumed already after six months.

Sexual jealousy and vindictiveness proving generally weak urges, divorce settlements are easily kept within the bounds of amicable arbitration. Divorce becomes, in modern parlance, a purely 'civil' case, which is tried by the chief, and in which the claims and counter-claims of husband, wife, and paramour are impartially examined. A change of heart on the part of a wife or bride, or her realization of the incompatability of the marriage, are admitted as valid grounds for divorce in their own right, without searching for 'alienation of affection' and its hidden originator. It is interesting that in this society where the age difference of husband and wife is generally considerable, too great an age difference between a girl and her betrothed is considered a typical instance of this incompatability, warranting divorce.

The rules of inheritance are simple. When an adult man dies, his land and livestock go to his grown-up sons, after the animals needed for the funerary sacrifice have been taken from the herd. Sons who are as yet unmarried and in need of bride-price have the first claim. If the deceased left no adult sons, his brother who will adopt the children also inherits the livestock, and later provides the bride-price for his foster-sons. The land will be left fallow until the sons will be able to take it under cultivation. Grain on the fields and in the granaries belongs to the widow and her grown-up children. Again, if the children are little, their foster-father will take over the crops and stores. Knives, axe-heads, spears, guns are divided between sons and brothers according to their need and preference; they would never quarrel or dispute each other's claims. Personal belongings in the narrow sense, clothes, and ornaments, are buried with the dead. The house belongs to the widow and the children, but if the deceased was very old (man or woman), and had been living alone, the hut or house is abandoned and not inhabited again.

When a woman dies, her most valuable property, her clothing and

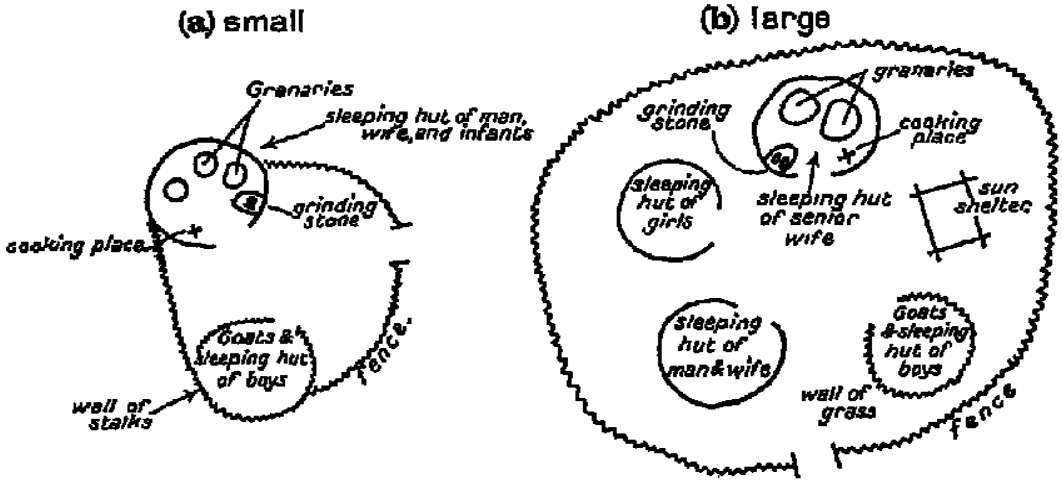
ornaments, is buried with her. Pots, gourds, spades, mats, &c., go to the daughters or are simply left in the house for anyone to use.

Let me say in conclusion that adolescence in Koalib is allowed the same fluid and uncanalized development which we have described for Heiban. There are no age-grades, nor any changes of status for adults. At least this is true of ordinary mortals. The only change of status is bound up with priestly vocation: it concerns those exceptional individuals who, inspired vessels of spirits, are raised above the rest of the people. Indeed, differences of status and rank are very marked among these protagonists of the spirit cult, who are known as greater and lesser priests in accordance with the power of the spirits of which they are possessed. Of this we shall hear more in a later section.

(2) *Nyima: Settlement and Homestead*

The Nyima tribe lives in large, densely populated hill communities which are conspicuously separated by broad valleys and river beds.

NYIMA HOUSE



Within each hill community the separate hamlets or villages (called *Bežī*), of the familiar type of straggling settlements, are bounded by minor landmarks—a narrow gulley, a rocky spur or ridge. Each settlement is known by a separate name, which is mostly the name of the geographical site. A number of settlements lying more closely together sometimes act as a unit, especially in ritual matters, thus forming a community within the community. These groups bear no special names, and their organization is loose and transient. They owe their existence to the appearance, accidental in essence, of possession priests whose reputation and peculiar mission would make them a focus of group interests.

The single homestead (*wer*) of average type consists of two round huts, one large and one small, surrounded by a thorn fence. Another, wider, fence encloses the adjacent farm plot. The huts are called *wel* or *ol*.

The larger of the two huts is built of timber-and-wattle; its wall is formed by two concentric rings, about 15 in. apart, of upright posts, with sticks of firewood stacked horizontally and end to end in the space between the rings.[1] The hut contains a few small clay granaries, a grinding stone and cooking place, and a bedstead. The smaller hut, built of grass and stalks, houses the large granary and is also used as a pen for goats and sheep. The large hut serves as sleeping-hut for the man, his wife and small children; young boys who are too young to sleep out in the cattle camps sleep in the grass hut, with the goats and sheep. If there are bigger girls in the family, the father will either divide up a compartment in the large hut for them, or build them a separate small sleeping-hut. Well-to-do men may have a separate grass pen for sheep and goats. A man who has more than one wife would add a new timber-and-wattle hut for each wife, till his house consists of a whole ring of huts. The spirit priests of the tribe, moreover, build a square, flat-topped shelter of timber and wattle in the centre of the homestead, in which they keep their ritual emblems, and in which they must sit when the spirit visits them.

The homestead, then, comprises the individual family. Married daughters leave their parents' home, and grown-up sons, when they marry, build themselves new houses of their own. Sometimes they will build their new house in the neighbourhood; or brothers will stay near each other. But as often they would move to a different part of the settlement, or strangers would squeeze in between the homesteads of relations. Kinship groups are thus irregularly scattered over the settlements and the hill community. This is equally true of clans, though among the tribe at large different clans tend to be concentrated in different hills.

Nyima: Clan

The Nyima clans, called *ara*,[2] are patrilineal, and the names which they bear are thought of as the names of remote ancestors from which the people of the various clans are descended. These ancestors are not, however, first ancestors, legendary first beings with whose appearance the known universe begins: these, too, are known—believed to have sprung from the earth, dropped from the sky, or having led their people to their present domicile. The ancestors whose names were borrowed by the clans are already several generations removed from these primordial beginnings, and concrete genealogies are preserved which lead back from the present day (though with gaps) to the ancient founders of the clans.

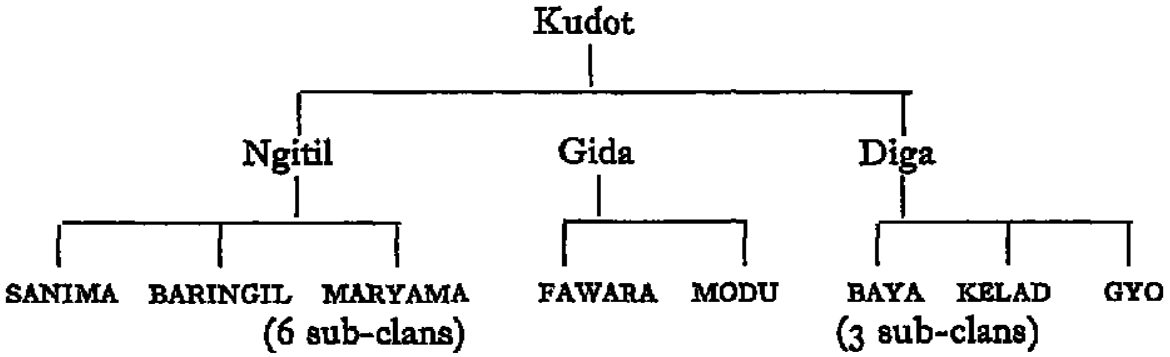
There are twenty-one clans in the Nyima hills, of very unequal size, some representing single segments, others sub-divided in two, three,

[1] Lately Nyima men of advanced tastes have substituted round mud-built huts for the traditional timber-and-wattle structure.

[2] *Ara* means literally 'bullrush millet'; the clan is thus likened to the stem and ears of corn.

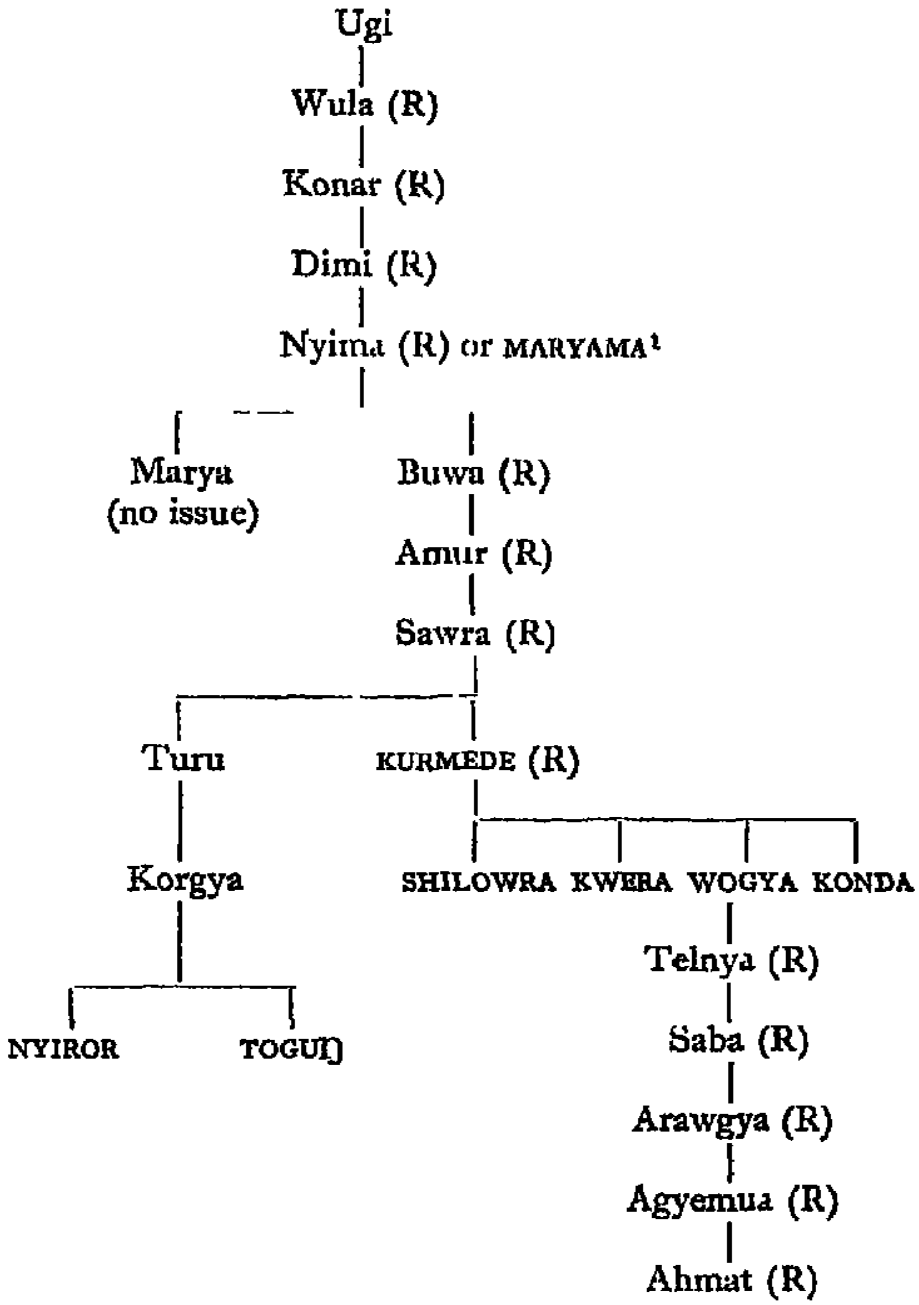
and four sub-clans. This sub-division (called *nwonwa*) is precise, clearly formulated, and the people are never in doubt as to the number of existing clan sections or their own membership of this or that sub-clan. Like the clans, the clan sections are known by separate names. Again, the names are those of ancestors, now a generation or two nearer to the present day—that is, the names of brothers or similar relations who were themselves descended from the common clan ancestor. In one or two cases the sub-clan names refer to localities, now uninhabited, where the newly separated sections are said to have settled first, before they spread over the whole hill. But in this case also the sub-clans are derived from a genealogical division in the past of the clan.

Side by side with these sub-divisions we find a bracketing together of two to three clans which, much like sub-clans on a higher plane, share many of the important rights and obligations otherwise vested in the single clan. These 'bracketed' clans are indeed often interpreted as sub-clans of a higher order, representing a genealogical division of more ancient date. Genealogies in evidence of such descent are readily produced, like the following, which attempts to explain, in one schematic pedigree, the derivation of three groups of 'co-clans' (two of them further sub-divided in sub-clans proper). To distinguish 'first' ancestors, whose names do not reappear as clan names, from those who became the founders of clans and gave them their names, I have written the former in ordinary letters and the latter in capitals.



Yet more detailed family genealogies fail to bear out these schematic pedigrees of clans. Moreover, in one significant case—the rain-maker's clan Kurmede or Maryama (we shall presently understand the double name)—a progressive segmentation of this kind is interpreted as implying, not an ancient sub-division in 'bracketed' clans and a more recent sub-division in sub-clans proper, but two different levels of sub-clans. I am giving this genealogy in fuller detail both to illustrate this complicated and sometimes confusing stratification of clans, 'co-clans', and sub-clans, and put on paper a pedigree which is of great importance in the political organization of the tribe. The names of ancestors who were founders of clans or sub-clans are again printed in capitals; the R behind a name indicates the office of rain-maker.

Genealogy of Rainmaker Clan



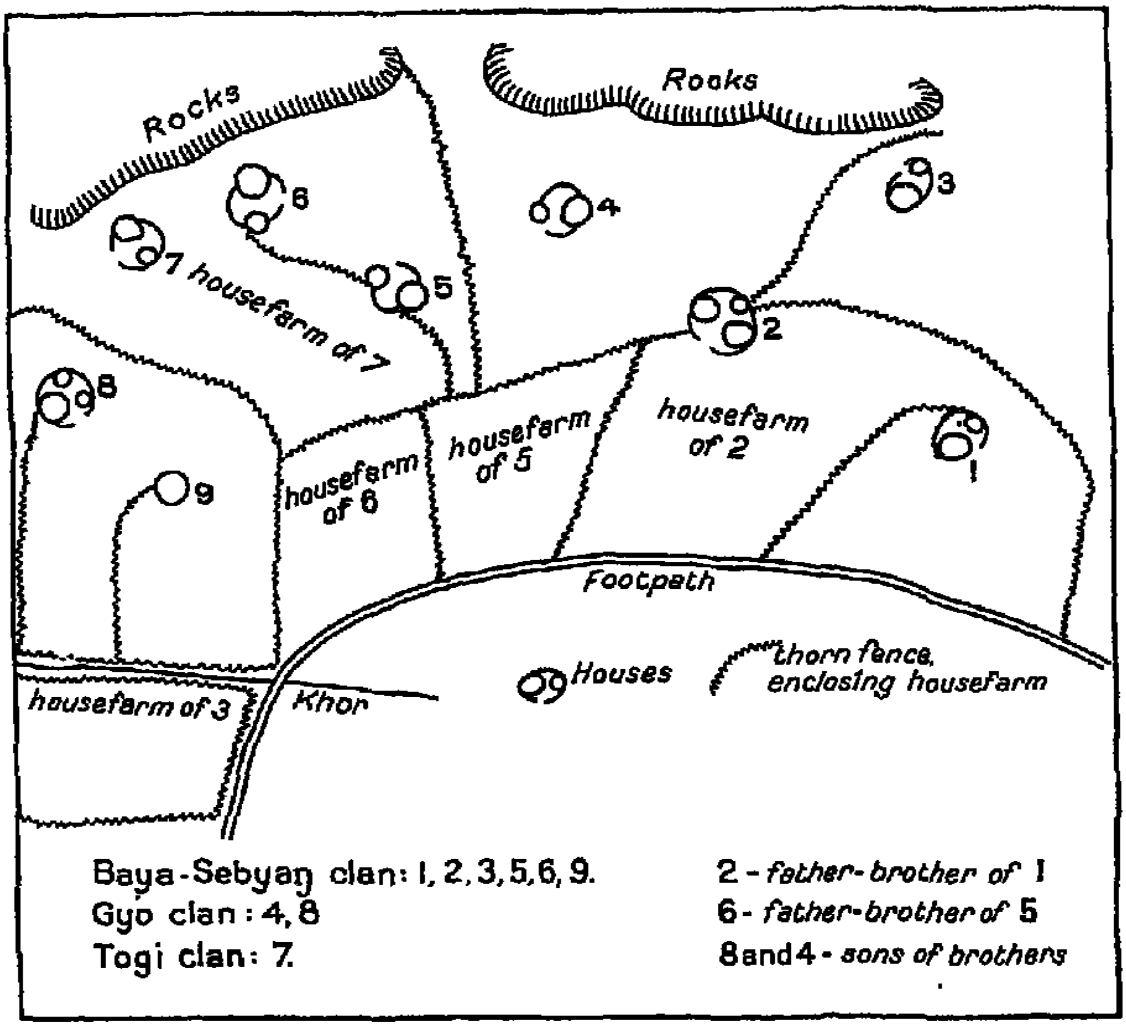
Maryama and Kurmede are not regarded as 'co-clans', but as sections of the same clan which came into being when Kurmede's large progeny (he had twenty-four sons besides the four who became the ancestors of sub-clans) split off from the cognate branch. The latter retained the original clan name, though the two names Maryama and Kurmede are often used synonymously. Kurmede, as the genealogy shows, is further sub-divided in four sub-clans, and Maryama in two.

Whether the 'bracketed' clans in fact represent a sub-division of clans of more ancient date, which at some later stage and in retrospect became

[1] Different theories exist to explain the derivation of the clan name, Maryama. The one most widely held is based on the tribal custom of calling a father of sons by the name of his eldest son—'father of So-and-so', e.g. Nyima, the father of Marya, is thus said to have been known as *Marya-ma*.

differentiated from the more recent segmentation in sub-clans proper, we cannot decide. But whatever the origin and history of this two-level segmentation, the 'co-clans' as they appear to-day differ essentially, in meaning and calibre, from sub-clans. As we shall see, they maintain their identity more fully; above all, they cannot be subsumed under a

SECTION OF NYIMA SETTLEMENT IN SALARA



common name; they preserve intact the most conspicuous symbol of group identity, the name.[1] Which justifies the special term, 'co-clans', which we have devised for this grouping.

The motives behind this progressive segmentation are difficult to understand. The explanation suggested by the situation in other tribes, that the segments grew too large to warrant the maintenance of the main clan obligations, exogamy and blood feud, on this ever-increasing scale, cannot apply to the present case. Exogamy, as we shall see, is extended, not only to the clans as such, but also to co-clans; and blood feuds equally involve co-operation of the whole clan.

[1] There is one exception: the three 'co-clans' Sanima, Baringil, and Maryama are sometimes referred to collectively by the name of their common ancestor, Ngitil. The coincidence of this ancestral name with the name of a hill community is said to be due to the fact that the mythical clan ancestor first lived on that hill.

Tribal mythology links the origin and past of different clans vaguely with different localities. This association is not conceived of as having ever had permanence or importance. To-day, clans are distributed irregularly over the single hill community and, to lesser extent, the seven hills of the tribe. We noted that different clans tend to be concentrated in different hill communities. A good deal of overlapping occurs, however, as will be seen from the following chart, which gives the distribution of Nyima clans in five hills. (Co-clans are bracketed together. Clans marked by identical capital letters [A, B] are mutually exogamous without being co-clans; *see* p. 389.)

Salara	*Tendiya*	*Kurmetti*	*Nyitil*	*Fossu*[1]
{Baya	—	—	—	—
{Gyo	Gyo	{Gyo	—	—
—	—	{Kelaŋ	Kelaŋ	Kelaŋ
{Kenya[A]	—	—	—	—
{Togi[A]	—	—	—	—
Maryama	—	—	{Maryama[B]	—
—	—	—	{Sanima[B]	—
—	—	—	{Baringil[B]	—
Kwolŋala	—	—	—	—
Fuy[A]	Fuy[A]	Fuy[A]	Fuy[A]	—
Gujer	—	—	—	{Gujer
—	Oroma	Oroma	—	{Oroma
—	{Aneman	—	—	—
—	{Kuder	—	—	—
—	{Dare	—	—	—
—	Modu	{Modu	—	Modu
—	Fawara[B]	{Fawara[B]	—	—
—	—	—	Badaŋ	—
—	—	—	—	Fande[B]
—	—	—	—	Golle

The Nyima clan extends its social effectiveness over many domains, some new to us. We shall find our usual distinction between clan observances of formal, symbolic significance and clan rights and obligations which serve the realization of specific social institutions more difficult to draw. As regards the former, there are, of course, the clan names—obvious and primary emblems of clan membership. But other purely 'formal' expressions of clan identity and difference are missing—food

[1] For Salara and Tendiya, I can give approximate population figures, showing the numerical distribution of the local clans. The figures quoted refer to tax payers, i.e. family heads:

Salara: Clans Baya, 441; Gyo, 1; Kenya, 49; Togi, 150; Maryama, 294; Kwolŋala, 5; Fuy, 15; Gujer, 43.

Tendiya: Clans Gyo, 44; Fuy, 250; Aneman, 182; Kuder, 494; Modu, 72; Fawara, 143; Dare and Oroma together, 80.

tabus, ritual directions, eating avoidances between clans, and so forth. Certain observances which sharply differentiate clan from clan are of too momentous influence on individual and social life to be classed as 'formal' differences of behaviour. They are magnified to fundamental divergences in moral conceptions and in the religious and magic fears behind them, determining the attitude towards marriage, sex morality, and pregnancy. Yet in a related domain, birth observances, we discover a differentiation of custom which can have no meaning beyond demonstrating the individuality of clans. Thus couvade, a certain birth rite called *dussoke*, meant to safeguard the health of the new-born, and the naming ceremony, identical throughout the tribe, vary from clan to clan only in one purely 'formal' feature, the time-table. The identity of the clan emerges, in familiar fashion, from the combination and permutation of these variants, as is shown in the chart which follows. We note also that two co-clans, Togi and Kenya, differ in this respect like clans proper.

Clan	*Couvade* (*length*)	*Dussoke* (*date of performance after birth*)	*Naming Ceremony* (*date of performance after birth*)
Baya . . .	boys: 8 days girls: 8 days	5 days 4 days	2 months
Maryama . .	boys: 10 days girls: 5 days	10 days	20 days
Togi . . .	boys: 10 days girls: 8 days	10 days 8 days	2 months
Kenya . . .	boys: 7 days girls: 4 days	7 days 4 days	2 months
Oroma . .	boys: 7 days girls: 4 days	7 days 4 days	20 days

I must add that the various numbers embodied in this ritual schedule have no further significance for the clans. The existence of these clan variants is commonly known, though the knowledge is not very precise. Informants from the clans Kenya and Oroma, explaining that the rules varied from clan to clan, also stated as a general rule that in every clan the length of the couvade coincided with the interval between birth and *dussoke* ritual, and that the number of days was always odd for boys and even for girls. Neither 'theory', as we can see, is true, though the latter might easily have been; at least it must sound, to the Nyima, convincing and highly probable: their culture is full of such symbolic dualisms—right and left, earth and sky, odd and even. (Presently we shall meet with more instances.) There are no such inaccuracies in the knowledge which the people have of the other, more far-reaching clan divergences.

These divergences concern, not individual clans, but groups of clans. I have spoken of them as fundamental divergences in moral conceptions: but in a sense they, too, are variants of a common motif—a common

moral principle, though it can be stated only in most general terms. It is simply that premature sexual intercourse of adolescents—more especially, premature consummation of marriage—is forbidden, the criterion being a certain universal ritual event through which man or woman must first pass. In one group of clans this ritual event is the circumcision of young men; in another, a certain ceremony called *kordi* or *kordik*, which forms part of the final marriage ceremony and should be preceded by the completion of the bride-price payments. In the first case the clan membership of the young man counts; in the second, the clan membership of the girl—that is, of her father. If a young man of one of the circumcision clans marries, or has sexual relations with a girl of the *kordi* group of clans, both rules must apply.

In one group of clans, then, sex morality fastens upon a *rite de passage* of the man as the prerequisite of consummation of marriage; in the other group, on the completion of bride-price payments and thus, essentially, on the satisfaction of demands made by the girl's family. Now, both rules are frequently broken; in fact, this loose interpretation of the moral code is considered almost natural, and its infringement only a 'small offence'. It must, however, be repaired by an act of expiation if, or when, the bride becomes pregnant. I will only say a few words about these expiatory rites.

In the group of circumcision clans, this rite is known as *sobodu*. It is not performed immediately after the discovery of the bride's pregnancy: first, the child must be born; then the child's father must undergo his belated circumcision, which always takes place, for the whole tribe together, in the ninth month in native reckoning (October-November); three months later, finally, the *sobodu* is performed. The young man must seek the help of one of the local possession priests specially qualified for this task. The young man makes beer, prepares a she-goat, a fowl, and a spear, and, on a certain day, invites his whole clan. The possession priest has sent his usual ritual assistant, and three men and three women to act on his behalf in this ceremonial. The seven delegates spend the night in the bridegroom's house. Next morning the three men receive the goat, fowl, and spear, and the three women three pots of beer, as gifts for the priest, their master. Before they leave they pour a little beer on the ground, invoking the blessing of the spirit whom their master serves upon the man, his wife, their child, and future children. The cost of this rite is borne by the bridegroom; the grain for the beer-making is reckoned as an additional bride-price payment and regarded almost as a fine.

In the other group of clans the expiation takes the form of the normal pre-consummation rite of Nyima, here performed out of turn and regardless of the bride-price situation, as soon as the pregnancy is noticeable. Thus hurriedly and belatedly arranged, it is regarded as a 'punishment' of the improper conduct. The ceremony takes place in the bridegroom's house, where some old women have taken the bride. A friend of the bridegroom, of rather specific qualifications (of which more later), acts as 'best man',

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charged with the ritual acts with which the bride is 'given away'. She stands just outside the gate of the compound; she holds her hands above her eyes, palms up. The 'best man' drops four cowrie shells into her cupped hands, touches her forehead four times with an iron blade, and cuts off a lock of her hair. Then the bride is dressed by an old man and woman of the bridegroom's clan in the bead-belt and apron of the married woman. Accompanied by four girls carrying large gourds filled with simsim oil, she later returns to her own home. There the gourds are emptied, filled again with water, and taken back by the girls to the bridegroom's house, the bride returning with them. The same night the bridegroom will wash in this water, and then sleep with his wife—for the first time, if the rite formed part of the regular marriage ceremony, or for the first time legitimately, if it was performed as a rite of expiation.

A failure to perform the expiation rites would mean, in the first group of clans, the death of the young man, and in the second, the death of the girl. The *sobodu* is, characteristically, described as a 'ritual of the man', and the *kordi* a 'ritual of the woman'. Indeed, the people speak quite generally of the two groups of clans as clans in which the men, and clans in which the women, stand under special ritual rules concerning marriage and sex (the man or woman 'has the ritual'). The sin of unchastity is the man's or the woman's, according to the clan group to which he or she belongs. The divergence in moral conceptions reveals itself as a dichotomy springing from the dualism of sex. As the dualism of sex implies a relation of complementary nature, so this moral dichotomy must involve the conception of the two groups of clans as complementary to one another, and as two segments of a wider, embracing social whole.

In four clans the man stands under the ritual rules: Baya, Gyo, Kelaŋ, Fuy (one out of four sub-clans); in four other clans the woman: Fande, Togi (two out of four sub-clans), Fuy (the three remaining sub-clans), and Kenya. Three clans are bound by both rules: Maryama, Modu, Sanima. Seven clans on each side, with three clans overlapping—this symmetrical, schematic arrangement seems to harmonize well with the dichotomous principle of this clan-bound morality.[1] But this symmetry is neither complete nor consistent. Ten clans ignore these specific beliefs in the sin of unchastity and the sanctions which it would entail. Two of the clans which accept the belief show certain deviations in their attitude towards the expiation of the sin. In the Maryama clan, which forbids consummation of marriage to its as yet uncircumcised adolescents, expiation is impossible; a young man who had sexual relations with a girl before he was circumcised must under no condition marry her, whether she was his bride or not, else both will die. In the Kenya clan, in which the girls stand under the ritual rules, the expiation rite is

[1] The schematic pattern can be traced in more detail. Each group of clans consists, as we note, of three plus four clans; we remember the corresponding division of 'ritual numbers' in the two pre-consummation rites: in the 'man's ritual' everything went in threes; in the 'woman's ritual', in fours.

INSTALLATION OF
Bayel PRIEST IN
KOALIB DRESSING
THE *Bayel* IN
HIS CEREMONIAL ROBE

NYIMA *Kujur*
IN TRANCE

DILLING WOMAN WITH HAIR-DRESS INDICATING *iro-iiri* MOIETY (*see* p 424)

Shul OF DILLING

possible, but differs from that typical of the rest of the clan group (it involves the sacrifice of a he-goat, whose blood must not drip on the ground, by a *tibeldi* tree associated with the clan and known as *kenya fo*—'kenya *tibeldi*'). Finally, the dichotomous division cuts across co-clans and even sub-clans of the same clan.

The people explain this irregularity in the pattern as they explain everything that pertains to clans and clan customs, and the clan-bound sanctions and expiations of unchastity themselves—namely, in terms of genealogical pseudo-history. They offer you this paradigm: a father has several sons; certain of his sons fail to observe the tribal code forbidding premature consummation of marriage—two sons, perhaps, obey and two ignore the rule. 'Would the father not curse the disobedient sons?' And this curse will pursue them and their offspring till they contrive to atone for the crime or sin. Either the father himself will enjoin on them some rigid observance through which they may rid themselves of their guilt, or the sons will in fear consult one of the tribal possession priests, who would show them a similar escape. For 'father' read 'clan ancestor', and for 'sons', 'founders of sub-clans', and the paradigm becomes a persuasive explanation of the varied and irregularly divided clan observances.

One element in this rationalization we may accept. For the motive of consulting a possession priest in spiritual difficulties and abiding by his guidance is real and dominant in the life of the tribe. If we admit this casual, individual motivation behind the varied clan observances, we must admit also its conflict with that other trend, of shaping the clan structure to a coherent schematic pattern. The co-existence and conflict of the two tendencies seems indeed characteristic of Nyima culture. Of the strength of the 'schematic' trend we have convincing evidence—more evidence than I can quote in the present description. As for the other factor, a society which submits to the guidance by possession priests and their deeply individualistic, inspiration-born pronouncements must embrace irregularity, accident, spontaneous reorientations as part of its creed.

Both the irregularity and the schematic pattern are visible in two final clan divergences. Two months after the birth of a son certain clans perform a ceremony called *korngada*. It is attended by the whole clan of the infant's father. A ram is killed, skinned, and roasted. The father of the child eats the first portion of the meat, liver, and intestines. An old man of the clan smears simsim oil over the thighs and breasts first of the mother, then of the infant and father. The guests, feasting on the meat, utter blessing formulae, thus: 'God give that we do this every year, and that there be many children, a child every year.' The old men among the guests receive gifts of tobacco; some tobacco is wrapped in strips of the ram skin, and will later be taken by the young mother to her parents. The whole skin has been cut in strips, and, finally, the old men tie bits of these strips round their left wrists or ankles, or round

their waists. The symbolic meaning of the various features of this rite is not always obvious, but the meaning of the rite itself, as a ritual of fecundity, is clearly revealed. Notwithstanding this universal appeal, it is performed only in the following nine clans: Maryama, Togi, Modu, Kenya, Fuy, Aneman, Fande, Kudir, and Kwolŋala. Ten clans have neither this nor any corresponding rite. Two clans which are without this birth ritual, Gyo and Baya, have 'instead' another ritual known as *mille turne*.

I have put the 'instead' in inverted commas for it is difficult to see these two rites as alternatives: with the exception of one superficial similarity, they present a completely different picture. Yet all informants stressed the link between the two; in fact, they invariably began their description by stating that the *mille turne* was performed 'when the father of the child' reached middle age, thus clearly associating this rite, too, with childbirth and fecundity. In reality, the ritual is equally performed by men who have no children. Nor does the idea of fertility find any special expression. Brothers or sisters of roughly equal age perform the ceremony together. Each man or woman contributes a goat or ram for the sacrifice; there is also plenty of beer, and when the beer is handed round each man, before drinking, takes a sip and spits it out again. From this spitting (*mille*) the ritual has its name. When the animals have been skinned, cut up and roasted, the old men of the congregation first eat the liver, kidney, and intestines; before eating, they take morsels of this food and throw them away over their shoulders, saying: 'May God take away all that is bad, and give us all that is good. May we do like this (i.e. perform this ritual) every year.' Again tobacco is distributed among the old men, and again the skin of the animals is cut in strips, all the people present tying bits of the skin round their left wrists or ankles, or their waists.

Irregularly distributed through the clans and uncorrelated with other cultural features, this last divergence in clan observances admits of no explanation that would mitigate its random nature. At least this is true of explanations based on the concrete data. The people, as I have shown, attempt to go beyond this surface irregularity and to discover some scheme and symmetry behind it: they link the two rites as if they fitted together and were complementary to one another. The 'schematic trend' thus breaks through, if not in the cultural data themselves, in their customary interpretation.

We shall later speak of circumcision, which represents, in this tribe, an event of utmost importance. It mobilizes the whole group in a series of rites on a communal and partly tribal scale. Now the initiates enter the ritual segregation which precedes circumcision in a fixed order, clan by clan. In Salara the clans Maryama, Togi, and Kenya come first, in that order; in Tendiya, the Modu clan is the first to enter the segregation, in Kurmetti, the Oroma clan, in Fossu, the Kelaŋ clan, &c. The order, as we see, is not complete; yet on its limited scale it defines the

various clans as interdependent, and their individual, 'formal', differences as elements in a coherent, embracing pattern.

We now leave the clan observances which vary from clan to clan and turn to clan rights and obligations vested in the clans as such—that is, in any clan, organizing group behaviour in the sense of specific institutions. These institutions are two, familiar from earlier descriptions: exogamous marriage and blood feud. The latter we shall discuss in a subsequent section. Of exogamy I have said already that it applies, not only to the single clan, but to co-clans as well. Here we must add also a certain mutual exogamy obtaining between clans which occur in different hill communities. These inter-group marriage prohibitions are not further explained. The clans affected by them are certainly not regarded as co-clans. Whether the mutual exogamy possibly represents the last remnant of a once stronger bond of co-clan type, obscured by long local separation, is impossible to say. The clans in question are: Kenya—Togi—Fuy; and Fande—Fawara—Maryama. Marriage in disregard of exogamous rules, never permitted, is also a practical impossibility. During my stay in Salara, a young man of the Sabyan sub-clan of Baya had seduced a girl of the Inan sub-clan of the same clan. He loved her, and desired to marry her. When she became pregnant and their relation could no longer be concealed, the lovers fled into the uninhabited hills, hoping against hope that they would not be separated. The village chief sent after them, the fugitives were brought back, and the young man taken to the court to await his sentence. In despair, he stabbed himself, though failing to end his life. Sexual relations of endogamous nature thus occur; they are, in fact, not at all rare. They are considered hideous and repulsive—if discovered; but they become a severe crime, followed by supernatural sanctions, only if they lead to pregnancy and childbirth. In this event, one believes, neither the parents nor the child of sin will 'grow old': sooner or later illness or misfortune will end their lives prematurely. The child born of this unnatural union must never go to its father, but will be brought up by its maternal grandfather.

Nowadays, then, such cases are taken to court. I have been told that the punishment of the man is especially severe, commensurate with the severity of the crime. In reality, I found that his sentence is exactly the same as that imposed in ordinary seduction (of girls already betrothed) —namely, six months in prison. The repulsion of the crime, even the fear of the supernatural punishment, have disappeared: the modern punishment having disposed of one and replaced the other. There was, for example, the case of a young man of the Maryama clan who seduced a girl of a co-clan and put her in the family way. The girl's father brought the case before the chief, who sentenced the culprit to six months' imprisonment. The child, according to custom, went to the girl's father. The girl later married another man. I was present when the young man, just out of prison, met the girl's father at a tribal ceremony. The two

men greeted each other cheerfully, like old friends. To my dubious question if this was quite in order, the older man replied: 'Why not? There is no anger between us now.'

Nyima: Kindred

The kinship terminology in this tribe allows much less scope for classificatory terms than the terminologies which we have studied so far. It partly replaces them by specific kinship terms applicable only to single relationships. In particular, the identification of grandparents and grandchildren, the identification of brothers, and in a sense also the reciprocal identification of parents-in-law and children-in-law have disappeared.

Kinship Terminology

Grandfather (pat. and mat.)	*abadiya*
Grandmother (pat. and mat.)	*atadiya*
Grandchild	*aninen*
Father	*aba*
Mother and her co-wives	*ata*
Father-brother	*abanenen*
Father-sister	*abanenen*
Mother-brother	*andr*
Mother-sister	*atanenen*
Son, daughter	*ude, bwidin*
Brother, sister (full)	*anene*
Brother, sister (half)	*abakeri* (lit. 'one father')
Father-brother's children Father-sister's children	*abanenene*
Mother-brother children Mother-sister's children	*anene wajar*
Brother's children	*anenan*
Sister's children	like mother-brother
Husband	*ashel*
Wife	*ker*
Wife's parents Husband's parents Son's wife Daughter's husband	*ayel*
Brother's wife	*aneshin*
Sister's husband	*anyara*
Wife's brother, sister	*anyara*
Husband's brother, sister	*aneshin*

In the grandparent relationship the changed nomenclature stands for changed personal relations. Grandfather and grandchild, not identified

by a common kinship name, are also not on terms of friendly, easy equality: the grandfather (like the father) is the severe disciplinarian and nothing else.

The relationship of parents- and children-in-law is defined by a classificatory reciprocal term. But this terminology is enforced only between son-in-law and mother-in-law. A man will call his daughter-in-law simply 'my girl' or, if she has a child, 'mother of So-and-so'; a son-in-law is free to address his father-in-law (if the age-difference between the two is not too great) by his name. This terminological looseness and differentiation reflects precisely in-law etiquette and avoidances. A man may not eat bean porridge or meat in his parents-in-law's house; he may, however, drink beer there once his bride is no longer living with her parents, though he will have to drink it outside the compound, and not inside, with the other guests. Fathers- and sons-in-law may accept meat from one another to eat in their own houses. But they can eat and drink in each other's presence and even together, in a third—as it were, neutral—place (though not from the same vessel). Son- and mother-in-law, on the other hand, must never eat together, nor see each other eat and drink. A man will greet his father-in-law in the fashion normal between older and younger men, offering his shoulder for a pat; but the mother-in-law may be greeted 'by mouth' only, and the son-in-law must never touch her hands or body. These avoidances are not accompanied by any supernatural sanctions—they are merely 'shameful', representing things that are 'not done'. The laxer etiquette between in-laws of the same sex brings out more clearly the element of sexual shame which we discovered behind this custom of the parents-in-law avoidances. The slight relaxation of the avoidances (with regard to beer-drinking) after marriage appears to express the same thought, though here the accent shifts more on the legal aspect of marital relations. While the girl is still living with her parents, bride and bridegroom already maintain sexual relations of that licit-illicit kind, forbidden yet admitted, or permitted yet supposed not to occur. Clearly, a son-in-law of such dubious legitimacy cannot be accepted legitimately among one's guests and relations. This temporary in-law avoidance which lapses with marriage is paralleled by another prohibition, between brother- and sister-in-law to-be: a man must not eat with his brother's bride while she is still living with her people.[1]

The most far-reaching divergence from the kinship terminologies of the other Nuba tribes lies in the disappearance of the 'identification of brothers'. The father's brothers are no longer classed as 'fathers', and the children of brothers and sisters are no longer 'sons' or 'daughters' to their elders and 'brothers' and 'sisters' to each other. Moreover, all

[1] The cancelling of this avoidance on marriage is clearly endorsing the completion of the marriage union. But since there are no general inter-clan eating avoidances in Nyima, it cannot be interpreted as in other tribes as an 'adoption' of the wife into the husband's clan and kinship group.

cognatic and collateral relations are distinguished according to whether they are on the father's or mother's side. We shall see that this new classification does not entail a completely new set of concrete personal relations. But it entails a fundamentally new conception of the kinship group as such. Its compass is much narrower; its lateral growth is kept within rigid bounds; the offspring of brothers no longer expands the single kinship group, but adds to it separate, independent lineages. Thus the solid transversal blocks of father generation, brother generation, son generation are broken up, giving way to the single lines of direct biological descent. To use a simile: the kinship group appears no longer as some infinite pyramid with ever-widening base, but rather as a series of parallel columns, infinite only in longitudinal growth. I have spoken before of the extensive genealogies which the Nyima produce. Going back twelve to fifteen generations, they represent a striking exception from the short-lived genealogical memory of the other Nuba tribes. Let me point out, without comment, this correlation between these complete patrilineal pedigrees and a kinship terminology in which lateral breadth is reduced to a minimum. The kind of memory which must be typical of the former seems borne out by the conception of kinship embodied in the latter. It seems logical, too, that the identification of brothers has no place in an interpretation of descent which makes brothers again and again, and in all genealogical detail, the founders of rigidly defined group segments—sub-clans or co-clans.

But though maternal relations are separated terminologically from the main, paternal line of descent, both paternal and maternal affiliation count in kinship rights and obligations. These are instances of matrilineal influence: Exogamy is extended also to the mother's clan. Though the inheritance of property normally follows paternal descent, one may succeed to the position of a possession priest, i.e. inherit an ancestral spirit, in the mother's line; indeed, women can also become priests and vessels of these spirits (though this is regarded as most undesirable by the men of the family or clan). The bride-price is always so arranged that after marriage a certain balance is left over to be paid in the second or third generation: men are thus still paying the bride-price of their fathers (or even grandfathers) to their mother-brothers, the continued economic obligation binding together successive generations on the paternal and maternal side respectively. Finally, in some clans at least, the maternal factor in procreation is given recognition in the rules of sex-morality, and the sanctions and rites of expiation discussed above.

This emphasis on maternity is balanced, as in most patrilineal tribes in the Nuba Mountains, by the practice of couvade. Name-giving in Nyima equally reflects patrilineal influence. The Nyima have no self-evident 'birth names' as have the other Nuba tribes. The new-born is given either an invented name or the name of some stranger, a person from another village or hill (with whom the child will in no other way be connected). It is named by two or three people in turn: the paternal

grandfather, one of the grandfather's brothers, and occasionally also its father; often children thus have two or three different names. (Young men will receive another, additional name at circumcision.) But this emphasis by nomenclature on the paternal role in procreation is once more equalized by the custom of calling both parents, colloquially, by the name of their first-born—father or mother 'of So-and-so'.

The clan identity of wives is somewhat obscure. The Nyima practise no formal, symbolic adoption of wives into their husbands' groups. Nor do we find any eating or other avoidances between the newly wed, which would later be lifted ceremonially to indicate the completed social identification of husband and wife (*see* p. 391, footnote). Indeed, we shall meet with the admission of refunds of the bride-price of a kind which, in other tribes, goes together with 'incomplete' adoption. Yet the people describe the adoption of wives into their husbands' clan and kinship group as complete, and wives are always spoken of as members of their husbands' clans.

The kinship group is extended, beyond relations by descent and marriage, by adoption—of two kinds: adoption of slaves, and friendship amounting to blood brothership (using this term in a very loose sense).

Slavery. Slave-raiding and slave-ownership were on a large scale in the Nyima hills. The famous *shirra* or 'Sultan' Agemna (Agabna), who led the last organized resistance against the Government and was defeated and hanged in the 1918 patrol, is said to have owned over fifty slaves. The very efficiency and ruthlessness of the Nyima slave raids forbade that the captives made on such raids should ever be adopted into the captors' families. These slaves, called *toro koyidi* after the heavy forked post which they carried tied to their neck (*toro*; *sagyura* in Arabic), were never used as servants, never even released from the huts in which they were kept prisoner, and kept constantly under guard lest they escaped or revenged themselves. Men and women were treated alike. There could be no thought of marrying a female captive—'she might stick a knife in your back', said my informants realistically. These slaves were held until they would be ransomed by their families (for eight cows or a gun) or, failing this, sold by their captors to Arab slave-traders or to neighbouring tribes. The Nyima, in turn, bought slaves from the other groups, and these second-hand captives, from whom one no longer feared revenge or escape, were used as servants and often adopted into the family as sons or daughters or wives. The servant-slaves remained slaves all their lives, married slaves and begot slaves. Those who were adopted became free men and women. A third category of slaves is known as *sheradi*. These were individuals who had left their country and tribe—because of quarrels, or a blood feud, or famine—homeless strangers who were ready to work as slaves for the Nyima. No force was exercised: they came and stayed of their free will. They were well treated and often adopted into the family of their masters.

Blood Brothership. Of rather peculiar design, it revolves round that relationship between a bridegroom and his 'best man' which comes into play at the pre-consummation rite described above. Like the ritual, the 'blood brother' as well as the whole institution are known as *kordi* (or *kordik*). The two blood brothers, however, call each other *amrkwe*, 'friend'—the usual address between friends. The *kordi* relationship is essentially one-sided: if I chose a *kordi* to act for me at my marriage, he could not make me in turn his *kordi* when he marries. If a man has more than one wife, he must find a new *kordi* at each marriage. One chooses the *kordi* when one becomes betrothed, i.e. about the time when his ritual services will be required. The *kordi* is invariably younger than the bridegroom, and must still be uncircumcised when his elder blood brother marries. Often the *kordi* is a young boy, too young even to undertake the various tasks that will later be demanded of him; in which case his elder brother may deputise for him (without altering the *kordi* relationship). In the choice of a *kordi*, one is guided entirely by personal liking, irrespective of clan membership. The two 'blood brothers' must not, however, belong to the same family.

Certain mutual obligations link the two partners in the *kordi* relationship: they will exchange gifts from time to time; they will help each other in farm work or when they are in need—for example, with gifts of livestock or money; they must never quarrel or use angry words towards each other. The younger *kordi* possesses a powerful magic over the older: before the performance of the pre-consummation rite the younger *kordi* cuts a few sticks of two trees (*naba* and *haras*), which will afterwards be kept in a dark place in the bridegroom's house; now, whenever the *kordi* has cause to be angry with his older partner he places a stick of the same kind in the fire, which would cause the marriage of the older man to remain barren or his children to die. All through their lives the *kordi* relationship bears, above all, on the marriage of the older partner. If the latter quarrelled with his wife or behaved badly towards her, the *kordi* would intervene to reconcile husband and wife—if necessary, using the magic threat against the husband. He would similarly use his persuasions on the wife if she were at fault—for example, if she committed adultery. While an obstinate wife might refuse to listen to her husband or her own people, she would rarely reject the advice of the *kordi*; indeed, she well knows that if her husband's *kordi* denounced her, public opinion would always be on his side.

So far the *kordi* relationship appears merely as one between intimate friends. Its significance as a kinship adoption or 'blood brothership' is revealed in the typical kinship avoidances which obtain between the two *kordi* and their families. The two *kordi* may not marry into each other's kinship group, in their own or subsequent generations. They must never meet each other in wrestling or stick-fighting contests. If they belong to the same clan, they may drink beer together, but are forbidden to share solid food. If they belong to different clans they must neither eat nor

drink together or in each other's presence. These avoidances obtain also between the brothers of the two *kordi*, and between the elder *kordi* and the parents of his younger partner; they do not apply between the younger *kordi* and his elder partner's parents.

The *kordi* avoidances comprise features both of the brother relationship (e.g. the prohibition of intermarriage, and of wrestling or fighting together) and of the relationship between sons- and parents-in-law (e.g. eating avoidances). The people, in fact, always compare the *kordi* relationship with the latter, adding that the *kordi* avoidances are like the avoidances with parents-in-law, 'only more severe'. It will have been seen that the younger *kordi* does in many respects occupy a position closely similar to that of in-laws: like the latter, he is a 'guarantor' of the marriage union, he is concerned about its endurance and success, and, in a sense, it is he who 'gives away' the bride before the consummation of the marriage.[1] The same association with the most intimate, sexual facts of matrimony seems to call forth the same reaction of avoidances in social contacts. They are, again, born of sexual shame, though its meaning is somewhat changed. For here it must be the feeling of shame on the part of the young couple to admit a stranger into the secrets of their marital life. This is borne out by the one-sided nature of the avoidances, which are extended to the parents of the young *kordi*, but not to the parents of the husband. Here as between in-laws, then, the avoidances cancel symbolically the shameful intimacy which the concrete personal relations must entail. The terms 'blood brothership', 'friendship', 'adoption' are, of course, quite incapable of expressing the implications of this relationship. The term 'blood-brother-in-law-ship', though more correct, hardly recommends itself.

Nyima: Marriage

I have spoken already of the discouragement of intermarriage with other tribes. An exception is the intermarriage between the rain-maker clan Maryama and the Hawazma Arabs in the Dilling district. This intermarriage followed a pact of blood-brothership (*wuli*, lit. 'blood') between the two groups which had been concluded four generations ago by the *shirra* ('Sultan') of Nyima, Saba and the *Nazir* Gadel Karim of the Hawazma. We shall speak later of these intertribal pacts. Here we need only say that the intermarriage was one-sided, the Nyima men declining to marry Arab wives. Why? Because Arab women, less pliable than Nyima, refuse to adopt the ways of their new families and tribe. In these mixed marriages the Nyima have slightly changed their bride-price customs. They demand the full bride-price at once, and not, as is the rule within the tribe, in payments spread over several generations.

[1] We might point, in parenthesis, to the sexual symbolism of the *kordi* ritual: the cutting of the forelock must mean defloration, the dropping of the cowrie shells fertilization. Symbolically, then, the ritual actions of the *kordi* blood brother initiate the consummation of the marriage much more decisively than does the 'giving away' by the bride's father.

In this they have made a concession to the Arab practice, which does not recognize such deferred payments.[1]

We turn to the impediments of marriage which are entailed in the kinship system. The kinship terminology, operating largely with specific terms, precludes the simple and sweeping extension of incest prohibitions to classificatory relations of brother-sister or child-parent description. The marriage rules must be formulated more specifically, thus: apart from incestuous degrees proper (i.e. biological brothers and sisters or children and parents), marriage is also forbidden with brothers and sisters of parents (and their widows, or widowed husbands), as well as with their children, i.e. with both cross- and parallel cousins. Two brothers, moreover, may not marry two sisters, but can marry two women of the same clan. Nor may a man be married to two sisters at the same time; but if a man's wife dies and a younger sister of hers is still unmarried, marriage with her is regarded as an attractive match; the husband will pay no bride-price until she has borne him a child, and then only half the normal amount. There is no rule forbidding a man to marry two wives from the same clan.

A marriage prohibition of a different order, not found in any other Nuba tribe, is this: younger brothers must not marry before their elder brothers, lest their marriage prove barren. This rule occasionally involves complications difficult to circumvent. A typical case came recently before the chief of Tendiya. The youngest of three brothers had courted a girl and obtained the approval of her father; he had already begun paying the bride-price when the girl's father discovered that the eldest brother of the suitor was still unmarried. He warned his would-be son-in-law that he must withdraw his permission unless that elder brother married first. Unfortunately, this was not at all likely, for this man was abnormal, of arrested growth, and not yet sexually mature (he was described as a *korre*, the name also given to sexual perverts). The girl's father found another suitor for his daughter and accepted from him, too, the first instalments of the bride-price. The issue before the court was purely financial: the principle itself was not in question; the court was merely concerned with deciding how and how soon the girl's father should refund the bride-price payments which he had received from the suitor No. 1. One sympathized with his bad luck, but could do nothing for him. His only chance lay in finding a father-in-law who was less faithful to custom, which was not impossible, for the young man's own second brother had managed to find a wife.

Incestuous marriage, like endogamous marriage, is a practical impossibility. Nor is incest in the narrow sense conceived of as possible. Even incest dreams about mothers or sisters are flatly denied. The men

[1] The recent reduction of the Nyima bride-price by order of the Government does not apply to these mixed marriages, which is quite logical, since the official reduction concerns only the first payment, devolving on the husband himself, and not the theoretical total to be completed in successive generations. Of this more later.

admit sexual dreams about other female relations, sexual intimacy with whom would still be incestuous, or near-incestuous. But these dreams have no evil meaning; rather the contrary: they may mean that the woman in question will become pregnant, and one is eager to communicate this news to the woman's husband. I have recorded no cases of sexual relations in prohibited kinship degrees, though my informants admitted the possibility. Their supernatural sanction would be the same as in breaches of exogamy.

The majority of men seem to have two wives or one wife; comparatively few have three or four wives. The marriageable age of men is surprisingly high. As we have heard, they are not supposed to marry till they are circumcised, which operation they undergo at nineteen or twenty. They thus marry their first wife at the earliest when they are over twenty; often they are much older. Their brides are as a rule four or five years younger. The marriage of girls who are not yet sexually mature is prevented, in theory, by the regulation of female adolescence. When the breasts of the girl fill out she has her ears pierced and, a year later, is allowed to wear for two months a special decorative hair-dress produced by the application of ochre and oil, which is called *getigle*. Again a year later her marriage may be consummated. This rule, like the other rules concerning consummation, is frequently broken. Its sanction lies in the publicity of the offence. For if girls become pregnant prematurely, they are no longer allowed to have their ears pierced or to dress their hair in *getigle* fashion; their unchastity is thus made known, and they must face the shame of being seen, as married women, with unpierced ears.

Marriages are arranged as often between the young people themselves as between a suitor and his prospective father-in-law, the girl's opinion not being asked. This is considered quite in order. In a law case which I witnessed, two rivals claimed the hand of a girl who had been promised first to one, then to the other, by her father. The decision went against the suitor No. 1 merely because he had failed to make good his claim by paying a first instalment of the bride-price. No one thought of consulting the girl, who was present; when I suggested this (merely to study the reaction of the people), the chief and elders agreed to do it, but made it quite clear that this was highly irregular, and quite unnecessary. Happily, the girl, too, preferred the second suitor, so that my intervention caused no complications beyond the general astonishment.

If the girl's father accepts the suitor, the latter will make as soon as possible (which may be some months later) some gift to his prospective father-in-law to seal the agreement. This gift, reckoned as a first instalment of the bride-price, should consist of two to four goats for a sacrifice and communal meal in the bride's father's house, which serves to announce the girl's betrothal. To-day more informal and more up-to-date gifts are sometimes offered—gifts of sugar, clothing, &c.—equally counted as part of the bride-price. The main bride-price payments, which now follow, may be spread over three to four years. The bride's father does not formulate his demands all at once, but specifies them in the course

of time. During the period of the betrothal, i.e. till the husband takes his wife into his house, he and his family must be ready to do farm work once or twice a year for the bride's parents. During the same period the bridegroom presents one or two hoes annually to his future father-in-law. The bride-price payments are concluded with a gift of seven to ten goats for another, final sacrifice and communal meal in the bride's father's house. It is called *orgol*; the kinship group of the bride, her friends and the friends of her family assemble to partake of the meal; the old men invoke God and the ancestors to bless the bride with health and fecundity. With this ceremony, then, the bride is 'given away'. There remains only (in the normal course of events) the counterpart to this ritual in the husband's house, the *kordi* rite, to complete the marriage ceremonial.

The place of the consummation of marriage in this framework of bride-price obligations and ritual events is defined only by a fluid rule, which is as often applied as it is ignored.[1] We can best describe the situation by stating the rule and its three variants. In theory, the bride stays with her parents till after the *orgol* rite, i.e. till after the bride-price has been paid in full, and the marriage is consummated, preceded by the normal *kordi* ritual, in the husband's house. The betrothal entitles the bridegroom only to the accepted evening visits to the bride's house and to private but innocent sexual play. On these visits he occasionally brings small gifts of tobacco, milk, or beer for the brothers of the bride, who will 'show him where to find the girl'. The scene of their love-making is the girl's own sleeping-hut or her compartment in the hut of her parents, the other inmates having been turned out for the occasion. Variant No. 1: a bridegroom whose bride is already sexually mature, but who is unable to produce the full bride-price sufficiently quickly, may request the permission of his future father-in-law to take the bride into his house before the time. If the father is agreeable, the pre-consummation rite *kordi* is performed in normal fashion, only the *orgol* is postponed, possibly for two or three years, until the bride-price and the final gift of goats have been handed over. Although the bride may thus have her first children before the bride-price payments have been completed, this arrangement is considered quite legitimate. It is, however, much rarer than the more dubious variant No. 2: Under similar conditions the bridegroom may be content to leave the bride in her parents' house, and to consummate the marriage there on his nightly visits. His gifts to the girl's brothers turn into bribes to buy their connivance; if he failed to do so they would denounce or otherwise frustrate his plans. It is an accepted practice for bridegrooms harbouring such 'illicit' intentions to slaughter a bull or pig and send two legs as a present to the girl's father. The acceptance of the gift (which is never refused) signifies the father-in-law's tacit consent. But officially he feigns ignorance. The fiction is still

[1] Some of my informants maintained that marriage according to the rule, with consummation following the completion of the bride-price, formed the majority of all cases. My own random census showed that of a total of eighteen cases only five conformed to the theoretical rule.

maintained that the sexual relations of bridegroom and bride are secret and illicit, and the consummation effected 'by theft'. When the girl becomes pregnant, the pre-consummation or pregnancy rituals according to clan must be arranged in expiation. The bride-price is in this case augmented by two to eight basketfuls of grain, which the bridegroom has to produce for the expiatory rites. The bride continues living with her people, even after she had several children, until the bride-price is finally paid and the *orgol* ceremony can be legitimately performed. In the final variant, the bridegroom omits to obtain even this connivance. The consummation of the marriage is, in the full sense of the word, 'by theft', though in the subsequent procedure there is nothing to distinguish these two degrees of illegitimacy.

In speaking, in this description, simply of bride-price, I have been somewhat inexact. I have mentioned before that a portion of the bride-price is not produced on marriage, and not by the husband himself, but is left to be paid later, by his descendants. The term 'bride-price' as we have been using it refers only to the payments undertaken by the bridegroom himself on marriage. They are made in accordance with the demands of the bride's father and vary considerably in value and composition. The deferred payments, called *su*, have an essentially different meaning: they are meant to bring the bride-price to a theoretical total which is standardized for the whole tribe. This standard total amounts to ten cows and four bulls, goats and other commodities not counting. Let me stress that the bride-price paid on marriage and by the bridegroom never tallies with the theoretical sum total; nor have the two ever tallied in the past. The balance is left over consciously, as a hereditary obligation which, as I have already pointed out, perpetuates the link with maternal relations. For the deferred payments are meant to be defrayed from the bride-price which daughters and granddaughters bring into the family, and go to the brother or brother's son of the woman for whom the bride-price as such is being paid. Even if a husband could afford to pay the balance at once or during his lifetime, he would never do so but leave part of it till later, to be paid by his sons or grandsons.

Let me illustrate this by a concrete example. A man whom we will call A married a woman B for five cows. The difference with the theoretical total was thus five cows and four bulls. A had three daughters, whose marriage brought him seven cows; of these he returned four as a first *su*-payment to his wife's brother. When A died his son made a second *su*-payment of three bulls to his mother-brother (B's brother) out of the bride-price which he (A's son) had received for his own eldest daughter. The rest, one cow and one bull, will be paid either by A's son himself, when his other daughters marry, or by A's grandson. These final *su*-payments will go to the brother-sons of B, her own brother having died.

The bride-price in the narrow sense is called *barbadige*, from *bar*, cow, and is calculated in cows or cattle, though it comprises other commodities as well. The traditional bride-price paid on or before

marriage amounted to eight or nine cows. In 1927 the Government, considering this amount too high, fixed the legal maximum at three cows, one bull, and fifteen goats. This was later further reduced, to three cows and ten goats. Recently the legal maximum was increased back to the 1927 standard. This means that in disputes over bride-price, e.g. in divorce cases, amounts in excess of the official maximum are not claimable or refundable. In reality, the legal bride-price is still frequently exceeded. But more important than these occasional lapses from the law is the fact that the intervention of the Government failed to take into account the existence of the theoretical bride-price total and its deferred instalments. Both have remained unaffected by the new regulations, so that now, with a lower 'bride-price', the hereditary debt is much heavier than before. In easing the economic burden of the present generation, the Government has increased that of the next; it has, unwittingly, intensified that kinship link between the generations embodied in the Nyima bride-price rules. We discover the rather rare instance of a Government-sponsored change of native custom which makes for greater social integration.

To illustrate the bride-price in the narrow sense a few examples taken both from the older and younger generation will suffice. One old man of about sixty married, paying two cows, three bulls, eighteen goats, one large spear, two knives, four hoes (the latter being gifts made during the three years' betrothal); in addition, he paid two basketfuls of grain for the expiation rite. The total money value would be about £10 to £11. Another old man had paid a much higher bride-price, totalling over £20, of nine cows, one gun, eleven goats, and one spear. A young man of twenty-two or twenty-four who married in 1938 paid four cows and fourteen goats (worth about £12), plus two basketfuls of grain for the expiation rite. Another young man, perhaps nineteen years old, had so far completed the payment of three cows, fourteen goats, and two hoes; two cows and four hoes were still to be paid.

Some bridegrooms have to find the whole bride-price themselves. Others are helped by father, brothers, or father-brothers. In a few cases the whole bride-price is paid by the father. The last seems to be true only of the older generation, though among these older men, too, I found several who had to produce their own bride-price without help from parents or relations.

The bride-price is as a rule divided up by the bride's father, who keeps a large share for himself, allots other shares to his sons and brother or brothers, and pays a final share to his wife's brother, as part of the outstanding *su*-payments. These last payments can apparently also be demanded directly from the bridegroom by his bride's mother-brother, in anticipation of the final share-out.[1]

[1] A case of this kind came before the Native Court. An old man had sued the bridegroom of his sister's daughter for having refused to present him with a gun which the old man demanded as his share in the bride-price. The claim as such was not disputed. But as the young man had not yet started the bride-price payments, the old man was advised to be more patient.

The Nyima bride brings a small dowry into the marriage. It consists of one goat, one male pig, three to six fowls, four to six baskets of grain, two to three baskets of simsim, one to two baskets each of early millet and groundnuts, a basket or so of okra (*daraba*), and various pots and pans, her own plank bed (cut by her father), and beads and other ornaments. The animals belong to the husband, the rest to the wife or the household. The total money value, so far as it can be calculated, is a little over £2.

The 'contractual' aspect of the bride-price is well substantiated. It is strengthened by the practice of the deferred bride-price payments, which bind successive generations to the single marriage. The recipients both of the bride-price proper and of the deferred payments are 'guarantors' of the marriage union, though in a different sense. The former are concretely concerned in the success or failure of the marriage, being held responsible for the refunds of the bride-price which a 'failure, (or what is thought of as failure) would entail. When the deferred payments are made, the success or failure of the original marriage is no longer a practical issue; defrayed out of the bride-price for daughters born of the original marriage, the payments have the meaning of securing the good wishes of maternal relations for these marriages in the second generation. These good wishes mean, above all, one thing—fecundity. The Nyima bride-price institution thus entails a 'guarantee' of marriage which is both concrete and spiritual, and which, transcending the single generation, envisages the continuity of the lineage.

The increase and spreading of the hereditary bride-price debt under the modern regulations would seem to help in spreading this blessing also. Yet the self-interest of the older generation denies such an interpretation. An old Nyima priest, acknowledged expert on all questions pertaining to marriage and fecundity, deplored the new situation, which, to him, was no change for the better. For now, he argued, 'mother-brothers hardly see the bride-price' (i.e. the deferred payments on their sisters' original bride-price). Receiving only a small share, they are angry, and no longer bless the marriage of their sisters' daughters as wholeheartedly as they did before: the result must be a fall in fecundity. The fewer children born to-day already show, in this informant's view, the effect of this unwholesome change in traditional custom—'for God listens to mother-brothers.' What the bond between the generations, embodied in this hereditary debt, gains in depth, it seems to lose in intensity; and if the 'guarantee' of marriage is now, perforce, extended over more generations, it is also (logically, to the people) less effective.

The aspect of the bride-price as a 'price' paid for the fertility of the woman is manifest in the common rules of levirate marriage, in the equally familiar rule that 'children go with the bride-price', and, above all, in the regulations concerning the refund of the bride-price. A refund of the bride-price is admissible both in divorce and in the case of the wife's death. If the marriage had been childless, the bride-price must

be refunded *in toto*, including the main payments as well as the initial and final gifts of goats for the sacrifices in the bride's home. A deduction is made for each child born, thus: in divorce: for one child, one cow; for two children, three cows out of eight; for three children, five or six cows out of eight; if there are four or more children, only a nominal refund of one cow is admitted; in the case of the wife's death: for one child, one or two cows are deducted; for two children, roughly half the bride-price; if there are three or more children, only one cow is refundable.

These deductions are not rigidly fixed; they tend to be higher if the children are girls, especially girls of marriageable age, and lower if they are boys. Besides, the greatly varying bride-price and the large, indivisible units in which it is computed forbid the adherence to a mathematically exact ratio.

Three years ago the chiefs and elders of Nyima made a new law reducing the customary total refund of bride-price at the death of a wife to a refund of half the bride-price (minus the usual deductions for children). This change of custom was the response to increasing complaints on the part of the unhappy fathers of wives who had died young or childless. The total bride-price refund threatened many with sudden poverty. They remonstrated: 'Is it our fault that our daughters died? We have not killed them: God killed them.' 'We saw that they were right', said the chief, 'and changed the law.' This is a most interesting change of attitude, instance of a conversion to fundamentally new moral values. The traditional conception of kinship responsibility for success and failure of marriage, judged by the absolute, impersonal criterion of fecundity, is giving way to the viewpoint of rational and personal guilt; a viewpoint, we may add, which has been fostered by us in all spheres of tribal law.

A similar assessment of the bride-price refund on the number of children born is applied in the non-levirate remarriage of widows. The second husband has to pay the full bride-price to the widow's father or brother; the latter makes the usual deductions and returns the rest to the first husband. I recorded the following deductions: for one child, a boy or a small girl, one cow; for two small children, or a girl of marriageable age, three or four cows out of eight; if there are three children, e.g. two girls and one boy, everything is deducted save the nominal refund of one cow. The woman's fertility has thus its exact economic equivalent. The family of her first husband, possessing the fruits of her fertility, forfeits the economic benefits of a total bride-price refund; the new husband 'buys' the fertility anew; the woman's father claims the difference since he and his kinship group surrendered the woman's fertility first to one and then to the other group.

This last application of the refund rules is nothing but a logical conclusion from the premise linking bride-price with fertility. Yet this supremely logical construction admits of two striking contradictions, both

NYIMA: DANCE AFTER CIRCUMCISION IN HONOUR OF SPIRIT PRIEST. THE TWO GIRLS DANCING OPPOSITE THE YOUNG MAN ON THE LEFT ARE HIS 'SERVANTS' (*see* p. 410)

DANCE IN ARAB STYLE IN TIRA MANDE

CHIFF OF 'ARABICIZED' KAMDANG

NATIVE COURT SESSION IN IIRA

The chief is sitting under the tree, in the background on the left his councillors, the accused is sitting on the ground facing the chief, the plaintiff is standing while telling his story The remaining men are witnesses, parties waiting for their cases to come up, or onlookers

unique features in the Nuba Mountain tribes. One is the position of illegitimate children after divorce. Boys born out of wedlock belong to the woman's father; the natural father can claim the child, whether or not he intends to marry the divorced wife, on the payment of one cow. Girls 'go with the bride-price', i.e. belong to their legal father, if he receives the reduced bride-price, from which the deduction for the girl or girls has been made. But this arrangement is optional on the part of the wife's relations; they might prefer to refund the full bride-price, which would give the natural father the right to his daughters. I may add that if illegitimate daughters stay with their legal father he would treat them in every respect like his own children. The bride-price, in other words, only 'buys' the fertility of the woman in so far as the husband actuates it.

This thought provides the logical link with the second contradiction—namely, the general belief that a barren marriage is primarily the fault of the man. This view becomes manifest in divorce cases in which the woman leaves her husband because he could not give her children. Women, the people hold, are naturally reproductive; the curse of a spirit, easily removed by the intervention of another, friendly spirit, might cause one or the other to be barren. But 'God made woman fertile', while among men some are prolific and others 'have not sufficient strength'. The insistence on fertility has its moral counterpart in the great shame of childlessness. Yet, illogically, the barren marriage shames the woman, and entitles the man to compensation.

The first bride-price payment as a prerequisite of the preliminary sexual pleasures of marriage; the completion of the bride-price as the key (at least in theory) to consummation—these are clear expressions of the possessive, sexual aspect of bride-price and marriage. Others are the openly admitted sexual satisfaction in marriage; the strong appreciation of chastity, which leads some men (by no means all) to reject a bride who has lost her virginity; and the right of bridegrooms, once they have begun paying the bride-price, to defend their marital claims by force against rivals. The emotions involved are powerful; often these fights, in which families and friends would join on both sides, lead to killing; an informant described the issues before the husband or bridegroom naïvely in these words: 'If you know the other man and his family are stronger, you don't use a stick, and you don't wait for the general fight; you take a gun, go to the man's house and shoot him. It is much safer this way.' Indeed, it would be correct to say that the emotional reaction outweighs all other considerations. For if these fights between the rivals and their supporters involved the loss of life the woman could marry neither bridegroom nor paramour, lest she shared in the blood guilt and its punishment, leprosy. To-day this unbridled vindictiveness shows itself in the comparatively heavy punishment which public opinion demands in cases of seduction (£4 to £6 fine, or four to six months' imprisonment). A less severe sentence would leave the bridegroom

or the bride's father unsatisfied, and there would always be the danger of their taking the law into their own hands.

Nyima: Widowhood, Divorce, Inheritance

The levirate marriage of widows who are still of marriageable age is considered desirable, but no pressure is exercised. The widow is just as free to marry some other man. In the former case no bride-price is paid; in the latter the regulations described above apply. The levirate marriage is either with a brother or clans-fellow of the deceased. If there are both younger and elder brothers, the widow should marry the younger; if her late husband had only one brother, she would marry him irrespective of age. If a bride is widowed whose bride-price has not yet been fully paid, and if she is willing to marry her bridegroom's brother, the latter will continue the bride-price payments; if she declines the levirate marriage, the payments so far made are refunded to the brother who would have otherwise married her. The brother or brothers also receive, from the woman's father, the bride-price refund for widows who have already lived with their husbands. The children go either, 'with the bride-price', to their father-brother, or stay with their own eldest brother, if he has already a home of his own.

For six months after the husband's death the widow is regarded as impure, and is avoided almost as if she suffered from a contagious disease: other people (except very old men and women, who are no longer afraid) would never sit close to her, or even pass by her too closely; nor would anyone drink out of the same vessel with her. For one to two years after her husband's death, till the performance of a purification rite known as the 'removal of the beds', the widow must observe rigid celibacy. Illicit sexual intercourse during this period is a most grave crime, and her lover would never dare to marry her afterwards. During this period the widow's brother-in-law, i.e. her potential levirate husband, acts as her guardian. He is regarded as the main sufferer in the event of such posthumous adultery, and it would fall to him to express the moral indignation at this crime: he would forbid the widow's paramour his house, exclude him from all gatherings and festivities of his clan, and, if he met him in another house, would at once get up and leave. Children born of this adulterous union belong, contrary to the general rule, to the legal husband's family. The dead, more powerful than the living, exact more jealously their matrimonial rights; nor can these be bought off by a posthumous return of the bride-price. I have been told that formerly the period of widowhood lasted four years; to-day only older widows, who do not think of remarriage, wait four years till they perform the final purification rite. Younger widows insist on shortening the period.

In divorce both wives and husbands may take the first step. Grounds for divorce are: incurable illness; repeated infidelity; constant quarrels which make it hopeless for husband and wife to stay together; unwifely

behaviour, like the refusal of a wife to cook and work for the husband; barrenness. A husband who decides to get rid of his wife approaches her father or brother, explaining the situation and demanding the bride-price back. If the cause was adultery or seduction, the husband may choose to fight his rival first, whether or not he later intends to keep his wife. The majority of men, it appears, ultimately desist from divorce if the woman is willing to return to them. For even if the man, in his first anger, demanded separation, his family will do their best to dissuade him.

Divorce on the ground of barrenness may be best illustrated by the following case, which I recorded in Salara. A widow who had been married to her late husband's younger brother in levirate for three years had twice left him; twice the husband took the case to court, and the chief and elders managed to patch up the marriage. The third time the woman insisted on divorce. She had had three children by her first husband, who had all died. Her second marriage was barren, and she blamed her husband for it. She was most unhappy, telling her husband again and again that soon she would be an old woman, and would have no children. Her husband promised to perform a sacrifice, but she grew impatient and ran away to her people in Salara. I did not witness the end of the case, which was adjourned and transferred to the court of another community (where the husband lived). But at the hearing which I attended the court fully sympathized with the woman's case. A good many other divorce cases, it seems, though they may appear under different guise, result from similar motives. For women who, in their heart, blame their husbands for the grave shame of their childlessness, will neglect their wifely duties, refuse to cook food, and quarrel, till the husbands themselves decide on divorce.

The rules of inheritance make the eldest son the exclusive heir. If the deceased left very young sons only, their father-brother acts as their guardian and trustee until they marry. Otherwise this role of guardian and trustee falls to the eldest son. He will take care of the widows until they remarry, and often also, as we have heard, of his younger brothers. Land, house, and the stocks of grain in the granaries are his. If the land property is very large, he may allot part of it to his younger brothers if or when they need it. Livestock, guns, money, equally belong to the eldest son. Out of this patrimony, he will later contribute to his younger brothers' bride-price just as their father would have done; but at the time of the death the younger brothers inherit nothing. Only personal property, like knives, spears, tools, ornaments, clothes, is divided equally among all sons.

If the sons are of fairly equal age so that it is difficult to decide who should become the main heir and trustee, this role falls to the (eldest) son of the senior wife. No formal will, by means of which this customary apportionment could be altered or influenced, is admissible. But a family head whose death is not far distant will often call his eldest son and give him last instructions, never disobeyed, how to administer or divide the

property, what shares to allot to younger brothers, reminding him of his duties rather than formulating a last will and testament.

The property left by women is insignificant, for they are buried in their most valuable belongings—bead-belt and ornaments. The few things that remain—pots, gourds, tools, a few odd ornaments—go to her younger, as yet unmarried sons.

Nyima: Adolescence and Adulthood

Male adolescence is divided in a series of age classes, loosely defined at first, but crystallizing, in a certain crucial phase, into strictly circumscribed age-grade groups. All age organizations embody, more or less explicitly, such 'crucial phases': they mark off vital transitions in adolescence, elaborating them in parallel, ritualized transitions of the novice-initiate pattern. In the age class systems which we have hitherto examined the 'crucial phase', associated with puberty, happens early on in age-grade life. In Nyima, the crucial phase and the rites which elaborate it are placed towards the end of adolescence; the preceding age classes have the meaning of preparatory steps leading up to that decisive phase, which is the attainment of full manhood. The central symbol of the ritual elaboration is circumcision—the belated circumcision of which we have spoken before.

Age mates and age classes are referred to as *kwede*. Each class or grade, known by a special name, lasts four years. The youngest age class, called *woudin kedin*, i.e. 'small boys', comprises boys under ten or eleven, who herd goats and calves and sometimes already sleep in the cattle camps. The second age class is that of the *söribaldi*, boys between twelve and sixteen. They herd cattle, sleep in the cattle camps, and begin to engage in the tribal sports—wrestling and fighting with long, heavy sticks. During this period the boys have their face-markings cut and body and neck cicatricized; the operation is performed by a woman expert who is paid 1 piastre (formerly seven cowrie shells), without any accompanying ceremonial. At the age of sixteen or seventeen the young men become known as *söridiya*. Up to this grade the age class names mean, in a vague fashion, merely boys of roughly that age; only the transition from age class to age class is suggested with more precision by the ritual events which mark the four-year cycle in the higher grades. Towards the end of the third grade, however, the age classes attain a stricter organization. The *söridiya* grade terminates in a special ceremony, known as *ordo*, 'water-holes'. It has its name from the large pits dug by the young men outside the settlements in March or April, which are to catch the rain-water and serve later as waterholes for the cattle. In this labour and in the various dances and ceremonial events which follow the young men belonging to the same age class are, for the first time, united in a common enterprise and appear as a group conscious of its identity.

This third grade is the last before circumcision. But its members do not necessarily pass through circumcision together. Some do it earlier,

others later: it varies largely with the ability of their fathers to go to the large expense of providing beer for the circumcision festivities. The circumcisions are performed annually, irrespective of the four-year cycle. One thus undergoes circumcision some time during the four-year period of the fourth grade; the young men are at the time between nineteen and twenty-three; they are known first as *kokanyar*, the 'circumcised' (-to-be), and after the circumcision, as *kokanyar saba*. Again the grade terminates in a ceremony, the *gusso tinu*, or 'beating of the bulls'. Afterwards the men are known as *kerikwe*, 'adults', who have farms of their own and wives in their houses. This last age class has no time limit; but the four-year cycle is once more affirmed in a final age-grade ceremony called *kokanyar ashi twil*, 'the circumcised [i.e. those circumcised together] drink beer'.

The connexion between the different age-grades is not close or rigid enough to admit of the exercise of discipline and authority. The claims of authority are acknowledged only symbolically, in the context of one or two ceremonial obligations. The various age-grade activities—utilitarian or ceremonial—are organized from without by the spirit priests of the community. The age classes nevertheless constitute groups closely integrated in themselves. The bond between men who went through age-grade life together, stretching across kinship and clan, is strong and lasting. It is also emphasized and made visible by certain observances of etiquette. The gesture with which age mates—men who were circumcised together—greet each other differs conspicuously from ordinary greeting. When two persons meet between whom the age difference is great, the younger offers his (or her) shoulder for a touch of the hand by the older. When two adults of slight difference of age meet, they shake hands. With two age mates, the greeting is as follows: one of the two stretches his hands out, palms up; the second man places his hands on top, in the same way; this movement is repeated twice; then the two clasp their hands, one man's hands inside the hands of the other. Again, the address 'father of So-and-so', mentioned before, is only used between age mates. At the circumcision, finally, each young man is given a new name by his age-grade fellows, a tell-tale name mostly, referring to some personal characteristic, by which he will remain known to his age mates all through his life.[1]

Of the utilitarian age-grade activities we have mentioned already the *ordo*, the 'digging of the waterholes'; we shall presently speak of another, the collective farm work on the land of spirit priests and tribal rain-maker. Age-grade life also includes sporting contests—wrestling and stick-fighting—which are performed in connexion with communal and tribal festivities, seasonal ceremonies, and suchlike. All these activities, however, are overshadowed by, and partly also absorbed in, the ritual events which accentuate the four-year rhythm of Nyima adolescence.

[1] It is interesting to note that these circumcision names, even those conferred recently, are more seldom Arab or Arabicized names than the names given to new-born children.

I cannot give a full description of these ceremonies, which are complex and over-rich in ritual detail. But I must attempt to outline their salient features, for they bear on the whole machinery of social co-operation existing in the tribe: they mirror it and, in the manner of adolescents' organizations, help to anchor its foundations in the minds of youth.

The ceremonies are performed independently in the different hill communities. Only the celebrations of circumcision are so timed that the various communities follow each other in fixed succession, thus affirming the wider unit of the tribe. In these ceremonies certain local priests, known as *medo eran*, Masters of the Hill, play a prominent part. The 'hill priest' (as we will call him) is an incarnation of the spirit, the tutelary genius, of the hill on which the community lives.[1] Through magic acts dictated by his spirit, the hill priest guards the welfare of his people. He is in charge of certain seasonal fertility rites; when grave illness breaks out or in the event of famine, he would perform the saving sacrifice on the summit of the hill; his magic also bears on the rites of adolescence and, as the mouthpiece of the spirit, he would lay down the time for their performance or this and that detail of procedure. We shall hear more of these spirits and their priests. Let me say here that some hills (Salara, Tendiya, Nyitil, Kallara) have two Masters of the Hill, belonging to different clans and serving different spirits, who divide the ritual duties between them. In the hill community with which we are primarily concerned, Salara, the two hill priests belong to the two co-clans Togi and Kenya.[2] The Togi hill priest is in charge of the early age-grade rituals, circumcision, and also of two fertility rites; the Kenya priest, of the final age-grade ceremony and of one fertility rite; both priests must co-operate in the occasional hill sacrifice intended to ward off illness or famine.

The digging of the waterholes, the first organized age-grade activity, ends with a dance of the young men and girls to the music of drums, which lasts fifteen to twenty days. During this time the young men stay out in the cattle camps. On the last day of the *ordo* celebration the age mates from the various communities visit the rain-maker of the tribe in his village; they take with them gifts of grain; they inform him that they have completed their first age-grade task and request the gift of a bull for the next age-grade rite, the 'beating of the bulls'. The rain-maker dismisses them with the words: 'Go home now and count the years: after four years, in the year when your seniors perform the *ashi twil*, come again; then you shall have the bull.'

Four years later, in October, the young men return for the promised

[1] Salara is to-day an exception. Here the hill with which the spirit is associated, Elaweny, is now uninhabited, having formed part of the Salara hill community till three generations ago.

[2] The situation is more complicated than would appear from this description; for the spirits of the hills remain sometimes for several generations without reincarnations. This is, in fact, the case to-day in Salara. The hill priests carry on as servants, though no longer as vessels, of their spirits.

gift. They drive the bull up to the top of the spirit hill; there the hill priest beats the bull with a stick, all the young men following, till the bull dies under their blows. Later the bull is roasted and eaten by the age mates and the old men of the village, who are their guests on this occasion. Later again they all repair to the wells at the foot of the hill. Here the old men address the young in a speech which outlines their future duties, and indeed the whole life of the individual in the Nyima tribe. This is the speech as I recorded it: 'You have made *gusso tinu* (the 'beating of the bull'). Count the years. Now you must work for the spirit priests and for the *shirra* (rain-maker). You will work on their land, you and your brides. We have given you drums and horns (the musical instruments played at the collective farm work to which the speech refers). You must not be lazy: if you neglected your duties to spirits and *shirra*, misfortune would befall us. We do not want that; we want grain, tobacco, simsim; we want beer and wealth. Also you will marry and have children (meaning that a neglect of duty would anger the spirits and their priests, so that they would cause their marriage to be barren). After four years you shall make *ashi twil* (the 'drinking of beer'), and your juniors will make *ordo* (the digging of the waterholes). Later they will, in turn, perform *gusso tinu*: you will hand over to them your horns and your drums, for they will then work for spirits and *shirra*. Such was our custom since the days of our ancestors.'

The *gusso tinu* rite is concluded finally a month or two later, after the harvest, when the young men forgather once more and visit the *shirra* with gifts of grain. Each young man contributes four to five basketfuls. This gift is meant as a payment for the bull; but the young men receive another gift in return, a cow, which they take back to their hill, to slaughter it (this time with a spear), and to present the meat to the men of the next higher age-grade.

The next event in age-grade life is the circumcision, called *shelakero*. The young men of the community who undergo circumcision in the same year are divided in a number of groups in accordance with locality. Locality here means that fluid local sub-division to which I have referred earlier in this discussion, which crystallizes round the persons of powerful spirit priests (*kujur*). Sometimes it is merely their memory which unites the group; the priest himself may have died and his spirit found a new reincarnation; or another priest and spirit may have succeeded to this spiritual leadership. But the group would still be linked with the name of the original spirit priest. In Salara at the present time we find four such groups; one associated with the hill priest of the community, *kujur* Godo; a second with *kujur* Damma, now dead; a third with *kujur* Abu Zed, also dead, whose spirit is reincarnated in his son; the fourth with *kujur* Layn, who only recently attained his position of a spiritual leader.

Now, the rites of circumcision involve a period of segregation on some uninhabited hillock in the hill community, which is changed from year to year; each of the small local groups chooses a different hillock. Within

each group the order in which the young men enter the period of seclusion is partly determined by clan membership: in Salara the clans Maryama, Togi, and Kenya must come first, the remaining clans following in no special order. The operation is performed on the first day of the seclusion. The young man who is ready to undergo the operation first is acclaimed as the *shirra*, the 'king', of the circumcised; he must, in Salara, always belong to the Maryama clan. Though the beginning of the seclusion thus varies for individuals and clans, it ends for all together, the longest period for anyone being one month.

Circumcision and seclusion are preceded by a preparatory period comprising several months, filled out with smaller ritual events. This period starts shortly after the seasonal ceremony known as the 'leaves of beans', which is performed in August-September. Now the circumcised-to-be dress up in festive fashion, decking themselves out with ornaments—bells, beads, bangles, and leather strings with charms.[1] They swagger about in small groups, five or six of them together, always singing, and stepping as if in a dance. When the time of the circumcision draws near, they present themselves to the hill priest, bringing a gift of a she-lamb and a spear, to learn from him when they should be ready. The spirit, through the mouth of the priest, tells them: in seven days, or in a fortnight. On that day the hill priest prepares the axe-head with which the operation will be done. The circumcised-to-be assemble in the morning near the springs at the foot of the hill. They sing and dance, and wrestle; now is the last time that the age mates may wrestle together: those who have been circumcised together must never again meet each other in wrestling or stick-fighting contests. The dancing and wrestling goes on for about two days. Finally, the young men elect their *shirra*, who is to be circumcised first, and, batch after batch, they all enter the segregation of the circumcision hill. The last night before the operation the young man spends in the house of his future father-in-law: thus the meaning of circumcision as an initiation to full manhood and its physical fulfilment, in marriage, is finally called to mind.

Up on the circumcision hill each young man has four 'servants', *bider*—two young boys and two young girls of his family or clan. The former share his seclusion, help him while he cannot move, and prepare the medicine (the bark of the *nahud* tree) with which the wound is treated; the latter come up daily, bringing food. They carry the food in covered dishes, always at dawn or after dark, so that no one should see it. For seven days after the operation the circumcised are forbidden meat, lest the wound did not heal. On the seventh day the old man who has performed the operation offers them meat for the first time; it comes from a goat or ram which their fathers or clans fellows have slaughtered for the purpose. They eat a little and send the rest as a gift

[1] The bangles and beads are borrowed from girls and women—sisters and brides of the circumcised-to-be. It is interesting that the Nyima firmly deny that the borrowed ornaments in any way imply dressing up in women's fashion.

to the hill priest. The boys of the Maryama clan are an exception, being allowed to eat meat at once. During the period of seclusion the young men sleep for the first time on the wooden plank beds which are the traditional bedsteads of the Nyima adults; the bed planks are a present from their father-in-law-to-be or their *kordi* 'blood brother', and they will serve later as their bridal bed.

When the period of segregation is over, there are dances and many festivities, lasting a whole month. The circumcised rest during the day and dance by night. These nightly dances take place first in the house of the hill priest and afterwards in the houses of the spirit priests to whose local groups the circumcised belong. The different groups visit each other and feast together. From the day when they entered the segregation the circumcised have gone about naked; now, a month after they left the hill, they bathe and don their clothes again. They also feast on beer for the first time since the circumcision; beer-drinking was forbidden before because it is believed to prevent the wounds from healing. After the beer feast the circumcised leave the village and move out to the cattle camps, accompanied by their girl 'servants' and young boys. There they have more dances, and also stick-fighting, every day in a different cattle camp. When each camp has had its turn, the circumcision festivities of the community end. But the circumcised of one community will attend, as guests, the festivities of the other hill communities which succeed their own. These visits are not reciprocal; for the young men from the communities which come later in the tribal rotation of circumcision rites may not attend the festivities in the communities which came before.

Since 1928 the people of Salara have added another item to the programme of these festivities; a dance and wrestling match, held on the day after the beer feast of the circumcised and before they move to the cattle camps, in or near the house of the chief. According to informants, the reason for this enlargement of the programme was the desire of the young men to display their clothes, which, in modern times, had become much richer than of old and a more important feature of the celebration. But the real reason seems to lie deeper. It reflects that fluid grouping and regrouping of the society round outstanding individuals of which I have spoken before. At the same time this reorientation is charged with a new meaning. If the customary dances and festivities of the circumcised were meant to acknowledge and honour the traditional leaders of the community, the spirit priests, the innovation recognizes the existence of a new, dominant personality, the political chief.

The age-grade career ends with the ceremony of the *ashi twil*—the beer feast of the age mates who went through the preceding rites together. In April or May of the appointed year they approach the spirit priest in charge of this ceremony. They present him with a young sheep and two spears and learn from him which day would be propitious and pleasing to the spirit. The ceremony lasts three days. On the first the age mates meet, each carrying a sword from which bells are dangling, and feast on beer.

On the second day, there is singing and dancing to special, sacred instruments: drums, antelope horns, and a 'ground-harp', which is made by tying the strings of the common Nuba harp across a groove dug in the ground.[1] Later a ram is killed beside this harp so that his blood drips on the instrument. After the sacrifice there is no more playing and dancing, the harp is dismantled, and all the instruments are hidden away under rocks, where they will stay till the next performance of the ceremony, four years hence. During these two nights the age mates must not sleep in their houses, but stay in caves in the hills. On the morning following the sacrifice they wander through the whole of Nyima, from hill to hill, visiting friends and relations. They are given bulls, cows, and goats: the bulls they present to the *shirra*, some of the goats to their local priests. The rest of the animals they slaughter the same evening in their own houses, concluding the ceremony with a family meal.

The meaning of these various age-grade ceremonies goes beyond that of marking off phases of adolescence. The sacrifices, as is expressed in the invocations and prayer formulae which accompany them, are meant to secure health, prosperity, and fertility. The ritual procedure and the grouping of the congregation, besides, underline, with the weight of supernatural associations, the social structure of the group: they throw into relief the existing group units—the local group, the hill community, the tribe; and they affirm the hierarchy of accepted allegiances—to the local spirit priest, to the hill priest, and to the rain-maker of the tribe. Already, as we have seen, new allegiances begin to be fitted into the picture. The transition is not invariably as smooth. Recently a serious feud broke out in the Nyitil hill community over the performance of the rite of 'beating the bull'. Traditionally, the whole community performed this rite in common. When, under the modern administration, Nyitil was divided between several sub-chiefs, two of them demanded that their groups should perform the rite separately, the chiefs themselves producing the bulls. The chief of Nyitil, who is also the hill priest of the community, seems never to have endorsed this departure from custom, which removed a section of his people from his spiritual suzerainty. A locust plague which happened some years later was promptly declared by him to be a sign of the displeasure of the spirit of the hill. In the name of the spirit, he ordered the dissident groups to return to the old custom. The sub-chiefs and old men of these groups declined, saying that the common sacrifice was of no use to their communities. The chief of Nyitil appealed to the Paramount Chief of Nyima in Salara, and the latter once more commanded the people of Nyitil to return to the single communal rite. The order was again rejected. Whereupon the spirit grew so angry that it forbade, through the mouth of its medium, the performance of the

[1] This instrument is called *koy* by the Nyima; to my knowledge, it is unique in the Nuba Mountains and this part of Africa. I know of its existence only in the Congo Belge.

bull ritual altogether. When I left Nyima in 1940, this deadlock was still unresolved.

Modern changes have also affected the time schedule, and indeed the whole structure, of the age-grade system. From our description the age-grade structure, with its four-year cycle, appeared rather more rigid than it really is. Sometimes, in the appointed year, the number of age mates is too small to warrant the performance of the ceremony, or a bad year may forbid the large expenditure in grain and livestock. In this case the ceremony in question will be postponed for two or four years (never an odd number of years), and the interval lengthened from four to six or eight years. Since 1918 the sequence of rites has been disturbed more fundamentally. First, the punitive patrol of that year threw the country into such confusion that the normal schedule was interrupted for many years. Then the large number of young men who, shortly after the patrol, joined the Army or police, or became labourers in the towns, depleted the hills of the candidates for the higher grades, so that most of the age-grade rites had to be postponed *sine die*. The men who are now about fifty performed the *ordo* rite in 1910, the *gusso tinu* in 1914, and the next rite, the 'beer-drinking of the circumcised', which should have taken place in the year of the patrol, as late as 1930. The age class born about 1900 performed the *gusso tinu* in 1922, having never performed the 1918 *ordo* rite, and the final 'beer-drinking' in 1938.

Of all these age-grade rites and events the most important from practical point of view is circumcision, the physical prerequisite of Nyima marriage. This is specially true of the young men who go abroad, missing the earlier age-grade rites, but plan to marry at once on their return, or often during a short home leave. Many, too, feel that it is safer to be circumcised before leaving their hills for their service abroad. Circumcision has thus come to be performed regardless of the traditional sequence of age-grades. Men who are now in the middle thirties, for example, were circumcised in 1920, but passed through the first age-grade rite, *ordo*, eight years later. Circumcision is thus becoming an independent rite, of new specific meaning. It inaugurates the age class instead of growing from it; it becomes, from a rite of transition, one of initiation in the strict sense of the word.

Girls grow up without passing through age-grades or *rites de passage*. Their age groups are vaguely defined, by the criteria of physical growth or change, and transition from one to the other is accompanied by no ceremonial.

The first age group is that of 'small girls'—*wodin kar kedin*; the next is known as *kerabaldi* ('girls'); when their breasts begin to show, the girls are known as *keradiya*; finally, with the first pregnancy, the girl becomes 'woman'—*ker*. The term *keradiya* refers to girls who had their ears pierced. When the girl reaches suitable age, a woman expert is called in to perform this slight operation. Holes are bored in the lobe and all round the ear; blades of grass keep the holes open, in which the girl will afterwards

wear small brass rings and big moon-shaped earrings. The woman expert formerly received a gourdful of flour, now she charges one piastre. Only in Nyitil is this operation made the occasion of a family feast, with beer-drinking, singing and dancing; and even this is a new custom, not older than ten or twelve years.

A year later, the girl will assume the head-dress of ochre and oil called *getigle*, mentioned before. After one more year it will be proper for her to move into her husband's house, for the consummation of the marriage. Not until then will she be allowed to sleep on the customary plank bed, which her husband will build for her. In her parents' house she slept with her mother or on the Arab *angreb*. But this custom, though upheld in ritual contexts (we remember the circumcision ceremony), has been ousted from everyday life by expediency: everybody, male and female, now prefers the more comfortable Arab bedstead.

Girls and women also have their back, belly and buttocks cicatricized, which operation entails no ceremonial and follows no rules as to time or occasion.

I have stated before that unchastity of the girl and premature consummation of the marriage disqualify her for the tribal emblems of maidenhood—ear-piercing and *getigle* hair-dress. But female vanity has found a compromise, and women who become pregnant before their time may still have their ears pierced, though only with two holes, one in the lobe and one on the tip of the ear. Nor is this compromise restricted to the body ornaments; for I found little trace of the proverbial 'great shame' in the attitude of other women towards their fallen sisters.

In a sense the whole nomenclature of the female age groups may be termed a compromise. It is concerned, not with changes of status, but with biological features; it ignores the crucial though all too irregular juncture in female life—marriage; it fastens, instead, upon the *leitmotif* of Nyima kinship—fertility.

Male and female adolescence are thus organized on similar lines. In spite of considerable divergences, the female age groups represent a parallel of the male age classes. Both embody, in their penultimate grade, a preparatory phase to sexual intercourse and marriage (male circumcision, the ear-piercing of the girls); and both are temporarily joined in the ritual office allotted to the girl 'servants' in the circumcision ceremony. It should not be thought that we are exaggerating this 'balance' of the sexes: it is borne out by that fundamental trait of Nyima social structure which we discovered in the juxtaposition of pre-consummation rites 'of the man' and 'of the woman', and in that more sinister 'balance' struck by the supernatural sanctions of unchastity.

(3) *Dilling: Settlement and Homestead*

The original form of settlement of the Dilling people is almost completely obliterated. Formerly they all lived together at the foot of the four rocks which are called the *Warken kurin*, 'the Dilling hills'.

They were grouped in a number of localities of which only the names are preserved. The whole group formed a single hill community; the single localities—too little distinguished geographically even to be called settlements—were organized and distributed according to clans. The people would still refer to this or that site, possibly uninhabited to-day, by the name of the clans which used to live there. These localities clustered round the grass sheds which were dedicated to the ritual services of the clan; the high priest of the clan would have his hut up in the rocks on which the locality bordered. The sheds still stand, and the priests still live in the hills which are the territory of their clans. But the solid settlements have disappeared. Large-scale emigration to the towns and an extremely low birth-rate have decimated the population. Moreover, with the pacification of the country and the foundation of Dilling town, a considerable section of the population moved from the original Dilling to newly founded settlements far out in the plain. At the time of the Nyima patrol (1918) three of these outlaying settlements already existed; a fourth followed directly afterwards; and many more in the following years.

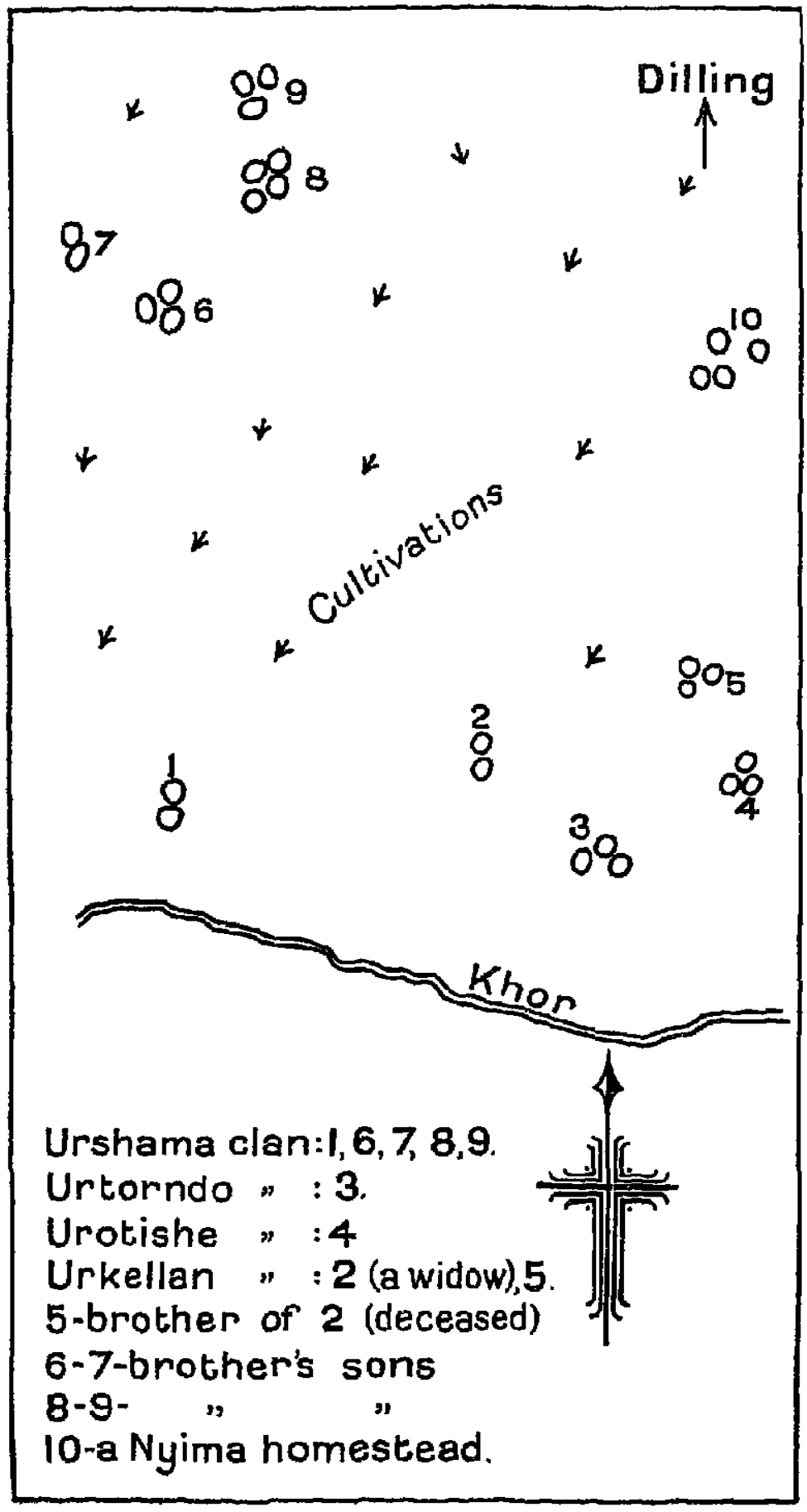
Settlement in accordance with clan division was probably not absolutely rigid even in old Dilling.[1] In the new settlements, it has ceased to be of importance. They are loosely scattered hamlets, laid out purely on utilitarian principles, to be near the farm land for the sake of which the new settlements were started. In one small settlement consisting of ten homesteads, I found five different clans and seven different families represented; one homestead was not of Dilling people at all, but belonged to a family of Nyima immigrants (*see* Sketch map). The old settlements at the foot of the Dilling rocks have remained the spiritual as well as political centre of Greater Dilling: like the clan priests, the chief of the tribe still resides in his traditional home.

The original houseform, too, has been largely abandoned. The typical Dilling house consists of four round, mud-built huts which, linked by walls, form the points of a narrow rhomboid. The huts open upon the central courtyard in small four-pointed doors with sides that curve inwards. The huts are elaborately built, with partitions and tesselated floors, and ornamented and painted outside. The modern Dilling house is, again, purely utilitarian; it is crude and unimaginative, without aesthetic design. It consists of a simple round mud hut for sleeping, a second hut, mostly grass-built, which contains the cooking-place, and a flat-roofed open shed which links the two; there is also a granary and a small goat pen, the whole enclosed by a thorn fence.

The group inhabiting the single homestead has not changed. It comprises man and wife, and their unmarried children. Bigger boys sleep in the cattle camps. A man builds a separate house or, in the new

[1] This can be seen from the local organization of Kaduru Hill, which is identical with the traditional organization of Dilling, but, unlike the latter, has remained intact.

A NEW SETTLEMENT NEAR DILLING (GEGAR)

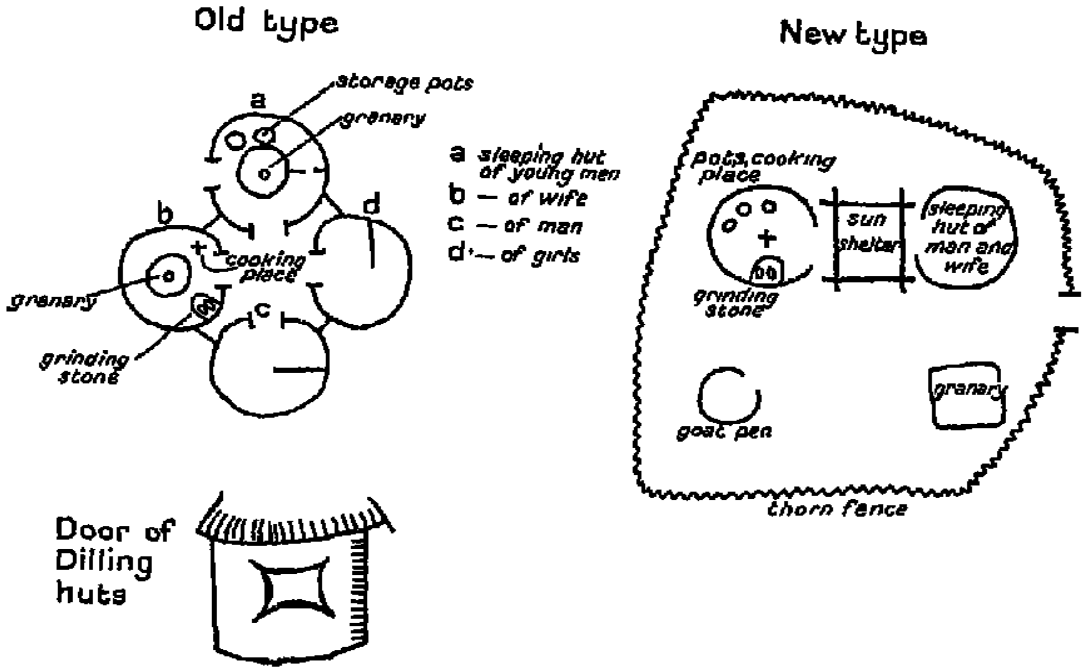


type of homestead, a separate sleeping- and cooking-hut for each additional wife. Sons, when they marry, may or may not build their new house close to the parental home.

Dilling: Clan

If it is difficult in Nyima to distinguish clan observances of 'diacritical' significance from those bearing on the realization of vital social institutions, it becomes impossible in Dilling. Every clan observance is at the

DILLING HOUSE



same time a contribution to the control of social life in the tribe at large; and almost every social institution of the tribe rests in turn on the specific varied rules of conduct obtaining in the clans. There is no social activity which is not a clan activity: and each clan has its vital part to play. The social existence of the tribe emerges fully from this interdependence, this mutual action and interaction of its segments which, in a previous chapter, we have termed 'symbiotic'.

The Dilling clans, however, are of a unique structure. The names of clans are fitted between a prefix *ur-* or *uro-*, and a suffix *niri-* or *-liri*; the former means 'spirit', the latter 'people'. The members of the clan are the 'spirit people'—the people of a certain spirit whose name the clan bears. The concept 'clan' cannot be expressed differently in Dilling language, and in asking a man about his clan you really ask him to which spirit he belongs. The bond between spirit and man materializes in spirit possession: in visionary experiences of individuals which are interpreted as incarnations of the clan spirit. The spirits can find their incarnation only in the members of the clan with which they are identified, and human beings can (at least in theory) become vessels only of their clan *uro*. To be a member of a clan thus means to be, potentially, a

vessel of a certain spirit. In reality, not every individual of the clan is visited by the clan spirit. Some become possessed irregularly, from time to time; a few become full incarnations: these are the 'Great' *kujurs* (or *gujurs*), the visionary priests of the spirits and their inspired agents. In their lives the clan fulfils itself—its mission. Of their office and vocation we shall hear more later. But in this orientation on two poles, realisation (in the individual) and potentiality (in the group), the greater weight is behind the latter. For even the full and permanent incarnations are such only within the scope of individual life. After the death of a Great *kujur* the spirit might not reappear for many generations; in the case of some clan spirits the last incarnation is only just within memory; two clan spirits (of the clans numbered 7 and 10 on our list on p. 421) are said never to have been incarnated in Great *kujurs*. The group is also more than merely a store of this mystic energy which unpredictably, now and again, takes shape in individuals. For in some measure, as we shall see, the bond with the spirit endows the clan as such, each individual in it, with the mastery of supernatural forces, and many ritual obligations and magic acts of the spirit cult fall, not only to its priests, but to the clans at large.

The clan system allows for the broken and incalculable tenure of its priestship by creating in addition the office of hereditary officiants of the cult. These men are called *kejar* or *kejat*, or, in Nuba Arabic, *gindi* (pl. *genadi*).[1] During the lifetime of a Great *kujur*, the *gindi* of his clan acts as his ritual assistant; in the interregnum between incarnations, the *genadi* carry on the ritual routine, generation after generation; they are the wardens of the clan cult and, in a sense, ritual clan heads. Only clan spirits which were once incarnated have a *gindi*. In the two clans just mentioned, which never had a Great *kujur*, the ritual functions of the *gindi* are entrusted to the head of a family which is regarded as descended directly, through the eldest son of an eldest son, from the first ancestor of the clan. This, incidentally, is the only instance in which the clan ancestor (of unknown identity) plays any part.

To the Dilling people the whole universe is divided in spheres, each the domain of a different spirit. As each spirit possesses a specific magic, so each clan, through its spirit, is the master of different supernatural powers. In their totality, they embrace life and nature; and in the co-operation of the clans the welfare of the society at large is assured.

The clan spirits are thus much more than tutelary genii of the groups bearing their name. They are the clans themselves, their other identity on some transcendental plane. Nor are the spirits identified with the ancestors of clans. The clan (as everywhere) is conceived of as a genealogical group, embracing the offspring—in the paternal line—of a common ancestor. But the names of the clan ancestors are not known; nor do genealogies exist which could trace descent back to that first generation, or anywhere near it. Altogether very little attention is paid to such

[1] We shall adopt the latter term, which is now in general use.

genealogical speculations. Memory and attention are absorbed by that other figure which is symbolic of clan unity, the clan spirit.

Indeed, these people who are unable to go back in their own genealogies more than three generations will produce elaborate genealogies of their clan spirits, showing descent and mutual relationship many generations back. Their interest in these speculations is unending. Often my Dilling friends, anxious that I should obtain the 'true' information, brought along informant after informant—old men who knew better than the rest who had been the father of spirit So-and-so, or how two spirits were related. Idle though these speculations seem, they provide the schema, a conceptual blueprint, as it were, of the clan organization. For the relations between clans, complex and irregular, are translated into terms of these spirit pedigrees; thus humanized, they become logical and convincing. The affinity in the magic attributes of certain clans is derived from the close quasi-biological relationship of their clan spirits; the unequal clan magic, of greatly varying power, is explained by the fact that the clan spirits are of unequal age—representing younger and elder brothers, or an old grandfather of failing powers, and his sons in full manhood; the irregular pattern of clan exogamy is, to the people, nothing but a reflection of the kinship relations in the spirits world: the exogamous rules between clans repeat, on the human plane, the incest prohibitions which must exist between clan spirits conceived of as brothers and sisters or as the descendants of brothers.

The spirit genealogies are supplemented and filled out by mythological data of even more anthropomorphous nature: about friendships that sprang up between the *uro* spirits (and again explain existing clan relations); about the wanderings of certain spirits, which led them eventually to Dilling; about their temperamental differences; about various adventures through which they acquired or first proved their magic prowess. We need not go into these spirit biographies. Nor need we reproduce the spirit pedigrees. Let me only say that the spirits mentioned in the genealogies are not all embodied in clans; some spirits are said to be too old to seek new incarnations: like tired old men, they have bequeathed their powers and position to their sons or younger brothers. One spirit, the spirit-mother *urne*, appears in (female) incarnations, but is not associated with a separate clan. Nor can all the existing clans be derived from the spirit genealogies. Two (the last two clans in our list on p. 421) are said to be of alien origin; their spirits are described as 'guests', as immigrants from Ghulfan and Kaduru who have settled among the Dilling spirit folk.[1] Both groups are small and, as groups, of little importance in tribal life.

[1] Here the traditions of tribal origin and the knowledge of cultural relations between the three tribes Dilling-Ghulfan-Kaduru appear incorporated in the mythical 'charter' of Dilling society. Whether the groups associated with the 'immigrant' spirits were themselves originally immigrants from these hills it is impossible to say, though I may mention that in Kaduru I have been unable to identify the name of the clan and clan spirit which the Dilling people derive from that hill.

The detailed accounts of the spirit world leave one striking gap: they tell us nothing about how the association between spirits and man was first formed. The spirit genealogies and the traditions about the past of the tribe do not meet, each interpretation stopping short at the no-man's-land between spirit and human universe. First there was an age of spirits; then an age of man, in which the spirits reappeared in their human incarnations—this is all that one finds to say. I had thought that this question at least would have invited speculation: whether the Dilling people brought their clan spirits with them from their old home, or found them in possession of the new country; yet it is thought unanswerable.

The magic powers vested in the clans materialize in two forms: in fixed seasonal ceremonies of the tribe, and in acts of magic assistance attainable to individuals and not bound up with a ritual or the seasonal calendar. Prosperity and well-being of the community are assured by the twofold mechanism of communal rites and individual offerings and appeals.

Of the former we need only say that they address themselves primarily to one, the greatest, clan spirit (the first on our list) and centre round the person of its *kujur*, but include, in their congregation, all clans, and in their magic acts, all clan spirits.[1]

Indeed, these seasonal rites, of most sweeping scope, appear almost as an epitome of the magic universe of Dilling. There exist three seasonal ceremonies: the first, the 'leaves-of-beans' ritual, sanctions the consummation of the first-fruits of the season (maize and other early crops), and safeguards the health of the cattle and abundance of milk; the second, called *urmalke* (lit. 'the *uro* appears'), known to the Arabs as *sibr al khel*, 'ritual of the horse', is a pre-harvest rite, which also secures the fertility of the land, the health of children, and extends its blessing to the horses of Dilling; the third, *onor*, is performed before the threshing starts, initiates the hunting season, and ensures the health of all livestock.

In the following list I have outlined the magic faculties possessed by the individual clans. (In the clan names I have omitted the stereotype suffix *-niri*, or *-liri*.)

(1) *Urtora:* this clan spirit is described as the 'Master of the Hill' and as being invested with the most powerful and comprehensive magic. The more specific magic prerogatives claimed by the other clans are derived from this master spirit and held by his grace.

(2) *Urshuli:* concerned with grain cultivation and with horses.

(3) *Urotishe:* concerned with cattle and milk.

(4) *Urkellan:* concerned with success in warfare, also with oaths sworn on spears or other iron weapons.

(5) *Urshaman:* concerned with the hunting of giraffe.

(6) *Urshumal* (*Urshumat*): concerned with the hunting of elephants

[1] A typical instance is the ritual called *onor* (lit. 'great gathering', known to the Arabs as *sibr al gidad*, 'ritual of the fowls'). It ends in a series of dances performed on successive days, each dedicated to a different clan spirit.

and leopards. This clan is the royal clan of Dilling: eight out of the ten kings (*shil*) of Dilling whose names the people can recall belong to this clan.

(7) *Urmande:* concerned with simsim cultivation.

(8) *Urtorndo:* concerned with honey and the fertility of the women.

(9) *Urshiru:* concerned with water and the digging of wells.

(10) *Urwartne:* no special magic.

(11) *Uronkit:* concerned with funeral rites and the spirits of the dead. This spirit is said to be of Ghulfan origin.

(12) *Urkonit:* concerned with cultivation of beans, gourds, and melons. This spirit is said to be of Kaduru origin.

To each of these clan spirits, then, individuals can appeal when they are in need of supernatural help. The tribal ceremonies, epitome of clan magic, absorb many of these special magic faculties—above all, those which are of more general importance in community life. But this overlapping also means additional security, the knowledge that over and above the communal rite one can always solicit the help of clan spirits directly—as it were, personally. Direct appeal and communal rite may even replace each other: a certain tribal ceremony designed to ensure the fecundity of the women has lately fallen in oblivion, replaced by individual offerings to the spirit possessed of that magic, *urtorndo*.

The realization of these magic powers follows no uniform rule. It varies, above all, according to whether or not the spirit is at the time incarnated in a Great *kujur*. If such is the case, the appeal to the spirit is obviously through him. If no Great *kujur* exists, you can either turn to one of the 'small' *kujurs* of the clan—the men who become only occasionally and irregularly 'possessed'—or make an offering to the clan spirit through the agency of the *gindi*. Or, again, you can simply deposit the offering in the shrine of the spirit (a hut, dedicated to the *uro*). In certain clans the power of the spirit is so fully a property of the group that any member of the clan can supply the magic help. These are typical instances.

A man or woman who desires a child must appeal to a *kujur* or *gindi* of Urtorndo, and present the offering to him: the priestly mediation is, in this case, necessary. If cows give no milk, their owner takes a small gourd of milk to the shrine of Urotishe and leaves it there: the mere offering is said to help. But if, for example, you intend digging a well, you can approach any man of Urshiru, the 'water clan', and ask him to cut the first sod; then and only then will you be sure to find water. Before a battle or raiding expedition the men used to enlist the help of Urkellan. If a *kujur* existed, they would appeal to him and he, in trance, would counsel them, prophesy the outcome of the fight, promise guidance; if there were no incarnations at the time, one presented a gift (a female calf) to the *uro* through the *gindi* of the clan. In either case the warriors knew that the spirit would accompany them and protect them in the field. The modern soldiers still follow the example of their

fathers, though their gifts are more up-to-date—sugar, coffee, cloth, occasionally a turban.[1] Let me quote, lastly, this interesting instance: a man who buys a new horse would approach the priest of the 'horse clan' Urshuli so that he might bless the animal. Then rather complicated rites follow, in which all clans and clan priests, and even the king of Dilling, must co-operate. The individual magic appeal thus turns almost into a communal rite. The great publicity only expresses the public importance of the event: for the acquisition of a horse must have meant much for the fighting strength of the tribe.

Some of these forms of magic can be used for selfish ends also: a man might plan to strike out for himself on a raid, unwilling to share the spoils; or he might desire an abnormally rich simsim harvest. His request to the *uro* would be granted; but he could not approach the spirit or its priests openly. He would steal to the shrine in the dark of the night, unseen by anyone, as on an unlawful errand.

The magic of certain clans bears, as we see, on animals, including big game like giraffe, leopard, and elephant. The clan names in no way reflect this quasi-totemic association; nor do we find other typical totemic features (belief in the kinship of group and animal, or rigid food and killing *tabus*). Yet there exist certain traces of totemic beliefs and practices, remodelled in the sense of this spirit cult. Thus we find the vague belief that leopards are the 'friends' of the people of their clan, that they never attack them, but, on the contrary, pay them friendly visits in their house in broad daylight. This friendship, however, extends, not to the clan as such, but only to its *kujurs*. In turn, only the *kujur* is forbidden to kill leopards. Other men of his or of any other clan may hunt and kill leopards with impunity, but must afterwards present the skin to the *uro* of the leopard clan. Similarly, the hunters of elephant and giraffe must offer the tail of giraffe and the lower tusks of elephant to the spirits of the two clans.

The clans are not forbidden to eat the flesh of these animals; but before doing so they utter a blessing formula and throw away morsels of the food in the different directions of the compass as offerings to the spirit. People of other clans seem not bound by these ritual rules.[2] Similar restrictions apply to the eating of another food linked with a clan spirit and magic—honey. The eating of honey is forbidden from the time when the grain stands arm high till the *urmalke* ceremony; when the close season is over a man (any man) of the 'honey clan' must be the first to gather the new honey. He himself must not start to eat of it until he has washed his hands (a feature on which much stress is laid) and offered a little to

[1] Thus when soldiers of the Dilling company were sent on patrol they invariably commended themselves first to Urkellan. Recently a company recruited in Dilling which was going to the front requested special leave to ask for the blessing of the war *uro*.

[2] This is not quite certain: some informants maintained that this 'grace' before eating is compulsory in every clan. As big-game hunting has completely disappeared, more conclusive evidence is unobtainable.

the clan spirit. Once he has eaten, everyone in the tribe can do likewise, without further preliminaries. Through these clans, then, the society controls in some measure the animal world (thinking now of bees rather than honey) and ensures the abundance of game.

The 'protective' clan magic which we discovered in the other Nuba tribes of 'symbiotic' structure reappears in Dilling, again shaped to the pattern of the spirit-ruled clans. If I have been harmed by someone, or if I believe that property of mine has been stolen, I can appeal to any *uro* through its *kujur* to punish the culprit. In the case of ordinary mortals, this avenging magic is limited: it works only on request; it is never fatal; and it does not cover adultery. But if the wrong is committed against the incarnation of the clan spirit, the magic revenge or protection becomes automatic, fatal, and all-embracing. If anyone stole property belonging to a *kujur* or committed adultery with his wife, the *uro* would kill him at once. I have seen people hesitate to enter in my company the empty house of a (small) *kujur* of the leopard clan for fear that the spirit might mistake them for housebreakers. And I was told that a man who, some years ago, seduced the girl-bride of the same *kujur* was killed by a leopard. But this protective magic is not feared equally in the different clans. It varies with the temperament and disposition of the spirits—some, older and more peaceable, will also be more lenient; others, young and energetic, give no pardon.

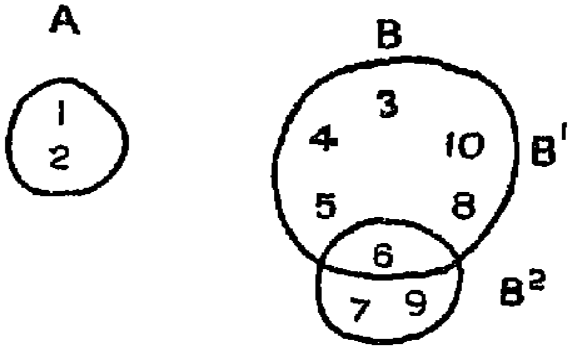
I must add in parenthesis that our list of clan-bound magic does not exhaust the store of tribal magic. Magic against locusts, for example, is attributed to the spirit-mother Urne and her female *kujurs*, both outside the framework of clans. This woman spirit is also appealed to if the rains fail.[1] Other types of magic—against illness, or the magic of divination—are so general in character that they can be enacted by any *kujur* (great or small) of any clan spirit.

Now, in all the instances hitherto examined the single clan represented the effective social unit. But there exists also a bracketing together of clans which subsumes the individual clan in a wider segment. It is hinted at in the spirit genealogies. It controls, above all, exogamy. The rules of exogamy apply very rigidly both to single clans and to the 'bracketed' clans. The schema of these exogamous divisions is twofold. First, the Dilling clans in their totality are divided in two exogamous sections—moieties, in anthropological phraseology. One comprises the first two clans in our list, and is referred to (though not invariably) by the collective term *uro-niri*, 'spirit people'; the other comprises the remaining ten clans, known collectively as *shil-liri*, 'king's people', after the royal clan which belongs to this section. Secondly, the *shil-liri* clans are further divided in two exogamous groups ('sub-moieties') which are so constituted that one clan, the king's clan (No. 6) occurs

[1] To be exact, it is Urne's spirit-husband, Urmbaga, who is responsible for a drought. A great traveller, who likes dry weather for his journeys, he stops the rain whenever he feels like a trip. Offerings to his wife will make her keep him at home. Urmbaga, incidentally, is said to be of Kaduru extraction.

in both. The following diagram shall illustrate the exogamous schema.

We will call the two moieties A and B, and the sub-moieties B^1 and B^2. The clans are referred to by their numbers in the list on p. 420–1. The insignificant clans 11 and 12 are omitted; as we shall hear later, they form more or less sub-clans of the royal clan.



The clans placed in the same circle may not intermarry, but are free to intermarry with the other 'circles'. The royal clan occupies an exceptional position between the two sub-moieties, its members being forbidden to intermarry with the other 'king's people' and obliged to marry into the other main moiety.

Marriage in defiance of the exogamous laws, it is claimed, cannot *happen; the existence of illicit sexual relations is admitted, but no super-*natural punishment envisaged. The only recognition of the abnormality of this relationship is expressed in the regulation that the offspring must be handed over to the woman's father or brother and may not be bought back by the natural father (as is normally the rule with illegitimate children).

The moiety division is felt to be of as great importance as the division into clans. Asked to which *uro* a man belongs, he would nearly always first state his moiety. Significantly, this wider division is underlined by symbolic observances and duplicated in other institutions. In fact, the only purely formal and symbolic group observance existing in this society serves to express the main moiety division. It lays down a different fashion of hair-dress for women who married into the *uro-niri* or *shil-liri* respectively.[1] The restriction of this 'badge' of group membership to women strengthens rather than weakens its meaning, since it brings the association with marriage and exogamy to the fore.

The Dilling clans are without the clan food *tabus* and eating avoidances which in other societies differentiate clans and emphasize clan unity. These eating prohibitions between the group segments reappear, in Dilling, in the context of tribal rituals and between the bracketed clans. On ritual occasions the two main moieties may not eat or drink together; the sub-moieties may share the same food and drink, but must not use the same vessels or sit together in the same place. Within each group the

[1] Women married into the former cut their hair short in the back and at the sides, leaving a fringe of short plaits in front, falling over the forehead. Women married into the *shil-liri* moiety wear their hair in plaits, parted in the middle.

eating-together at ritual occasions falls under special rules. Their paradigm is the 'order of tasting' which must be observed in the first-fruit rituals. It lays down a strict order of precedence in which the different clans—or the *genadi*, as their ritual heads—may taste of the consecrated food. The 'order of tasting' (*tanere*) engages the attention of the people to a striking extent; it crops up constantly in references to other clans. It constitutes no less than an order of clan seniority, involving prerogatives of consequence, and derived from the ultimate source of the Dilling clan system, the spirit genealogy.

Yet the spirit pedigree provides a not quite consistent authority for the moiety division, although it is constantly cited as such ('We eat together because our *uro* are brothers'; 'We do not intermarry because our *uro* are brothers'). The criterion of spirit kinship does not preclude the adoption of the two 'alien' sections, Uronkit and Urkonit, among the brother clans.[1] Practical consideration may have overruled the theory; for, though possessed of magic individuality, the groups are much too small to form a segment of their own. They are too small even to count as full groups like the other clans in the sub-moiety. They are linked with the main clan in that segment, Urshumal (the royal clan), sharing its *gindi* and ritual as well as exogamous obligations—regardless of the fact that they may have (actually have, at the moment) a *kujur* of their own. They are described as 'belonging' to Urshumal, in the manner of sub-clans.

They are 'sub-clans' in a rather unusual sense, the result of affiliation, not of segmentation, to which our term usually refers. Of the latter process we also find instances: in certain extremely fluid, almost tentative groupings interesting more for what they might mean than for their actual importance in tribal life. They might mean that the mythological pedigree contains an element of truth, in other words, that the 'bracketed' clans (or some of them) are in fact the result of progressive segmentation.

Now and again, it seems, clans witness spirit manifestations which do not fully conform to the accepted picture of the clan spirits. The unorthodox incarnation is then identified with that of some relation of the clan spirit not previously embodied, which explanation reconciles the irregular manifestation with the dogma of (unchanging) clan spirits. The descendants of the man who became the first incarnation will assume the name of the new spirit, though they would (for some time at least) still follow the rules of the mother clan. Often, if no new incarnations happen, or if the lineage scatters or dies out, the new section is re-absorbed and forgotten. We discover two such 'tentative' sub-sections, one associated with a spirit known as Urkorman (about whose original incarnation there is uncertainty), and the other as Urturi; the former is described as the father, the latter as the son of Urshumal. The lineage of Urkorman has nearly died out, and it is difficult to obtain information

[1] Or, again, the moiety B comprises a certain clan (Uimande) whose spirit is regarded as the brother of the spirit Urshuli, in the moiety A.

about this already half-forgotten group. The spirit Urturi was incarnated for the first time in a rather famous *hujur* (of Urshumal extraction) who died some years ago. Before his time, no one had ever heard of this spirit. His family, to-day, regards itself vaguely as a sub-section of Urshumal.

Psychologically, this appearance of new spirits expresses the breaking away from the firm conditioning by spirit dogma and mythology. New needs, the thoughts of new magic, may well provide a momentary stimulus; or the stimulus might lie in the incalculable, unpredictable trend inherent in all visionary cults. However this may be, the groups which crystallize only to be obscured again are clearly nascent clans whose development has been cut short. The existing clans, identified with spirits which stand in the relationship of brothers or of fathers and sons, have probably arisen in a like manner: but repeated reincarnations or the increase of the group gave them permanency.

Dilling: Kindred

The kinship terminology of Dilling goes one step beyond Nyima in abandoning classificatory and embracing specific and descriptive kinship terms. With the disappearance of the classificatory categories, the identity of the kindred itself is dissolved. For its boundaries are the boundaries of the inclusive kinship classes: the unity of the kindred, of which one is conscious because over it the same few kinship terms are extended, is broken up into a multitude of individual bonds of graded remoteness. The Dilling kinship system thus rests only on the small biological family; it only knows the biological family, and beyond it no second, wider, kinship unit, but merely the receding circles of more and more indirect relationship ('father-brother', 'father-brother's son', &c.) which, at some point, must shade over into strangeness. The examination of kinship rights and duties will endorse this interpretation suggested by the terminological structure.

Kinship Terminology

Grandfather (pat. and mat.)	*anakorta*
Grandmother (pat. and mat.)	*anabaneri*
Grandchild	*anata*
Father	*ambaga*
Mother	*(an)ena*
Father-brother	*amba-nenta* (lit.)[1]
Father-sister	*ananye*
Mother-brother	*andigya*
Mother-sister	*ana-nenta* (lit.)
Son, daughter	*ondwano*

[1] The (lit.) behind the kinship term indicates that it represents a literal description of the relationship, e g. *ana-nenta*, mother-brother, or *anenta-eren-dwano*, brother-woman- (i.e. sister) child.

Kinship Terminology—continued

Brother, sister (full)	*anenta*, or *anan-dwano* (i.e. mother-children)
Brother, sister (half)	*anenta*, or *ambagan-dwano* (i.e. father-children)
Father-brother's children	*ambanenta-dwano* (lit.)
Father-sister's children	*ananya-dwano* (lit.)
Mother-brother's children Mother-sister's children	*anenra*
Brother's son, daughter	*anenta-dwano* (lit.)
Sister's son, daughter	*anenta-eren-dwano* (lit.)
Husband	*anogya*
Wife	*onire*
Wife's parents	*anoda*
Husband's parents	*aneda*
Son's wife	*ondwandonire* (lit.)
Daughter's husband	like wife's parents
Brother's wife	*anonda*
Sister's husband Wife's brother, sister Wife's brother, sister	*avra*
Husband's brother, sister	*onda, anonda*

The only classificatory identification employed in this kinship system is that embodied in the reciprocal term for son-in-law and parents-in-law (wife's parents). It stands for a relationship marked as usual by an etiquette of mutual avoidances. The two may not eat or drink together or in each other's presence, nor even sit close together. A son-in-law must not enter his father-in-law's house after the marriage; but he may pay him visits, sitting outside the house, and would greet him with the gesture usual between younger and older persons (*see* p. 437). He must always show him deep respect, while the father-in-law will, in turn, behave most friendly towards his son-in-law.[1] No avoidances or special rules of etiquette exist between the wife and her parents-in-law—which relationship is not expressed in a classificatory term. Yet the logic of this terminological differentiation does not go very far; for the husband is bound by the same avoidances which he observes towards his father-in-law, also towards his wife's father-brother and mother-brother (whom he does not equally call 'fathers-in-law').

However, in a kinship system whose terminology is essentially descriptive, no conclusions can be drawn from the absence of terminological

[1] These rules are taken extremely seriously. In a divorce case which I witnessed the anger of the woman's father was aroused much more by the irreverent behaviour of his son-in-law than by his alleged cruelty to his wife. The son-in-law, on the other hand, remonstrated that his father-in-law had asked him to fetch his wife from his (the father-in-law's) house, which was obviously an impossible demand. And some of the court elders suggested that the father-in-law should be fined for having behaved in an unfriendly fashion towards his son-in-law.

identifications. The grandfather, for example, plays in Dilling as in other tribes the part of the friendly, benign old man who would never punish his grandchildren or let them be punished in his presence. The mother-brother acts as another protector of the young. Father, mother, father-brothers, and mother-sisters, on the other hand, have no compunction in dealing roughly with the children, though a mother would sometimes interfere if she thought her husband too severe a disciplinarian, and *vice versa*.

Cousins on the father's side are often referred to colloquially as 'brothers' and 'sisters'; but this casual 'classificatory' nomenclature represents merely a loose use of language. Cousins on the mother's side, i.e. the children of mother-brothers and mother-sisters, are subsumed under a common kinship term, the reason for which is difficult to see: they must belong to different clans and moieties, and also come, as we shall see presently, under different categories with regard to prohibited degrees. The latter are based on the distinction between cross- and parallel-cousins, which in turn is left unexpressed in the terminology.

In the discussion of the kinship terminology of Nyima, I have said that the disappearance of the 'identification of brothers' must reduce the lateral growth of the kinship group and foster instead the consciousness of the direct, single line of descent. Though the former is equally true of the Dilling system, we do not find the compensating length of remembered pedigrees. But, as I have said, the genealogical thought of the Dilling people is deflected and absorbed by their spirit genealogies. There seems little incentive to remember long human pedigrees; they are meaningless beside the dominant interest of Dilling life, spirit possession, which ignores families and heredity, and knows only either individuals or the clan. Significantly, there are exceptions—families which hold hereditary offices: the families of the king and of the *genadi* can trace their genealogies back six to ten generations.[1]

The uniformly descriptive terminology does in no way indicate whether maternal relations are thought of as 'belonging' to or as being outside the orbit of kinship. The extension of the in-law avoidances to the wife's mother-brother; the inclusion of maternal relations in the self-exile of a murderer's family (*see* p. 464); and the recognition of the special pedagogic role of the children's mother-brother, seem to signify the former. But with these minor concessions matrilineal importance ends. The bride-price includes certain payments to the bride's mother,[2] but none to the other maternal relations; nor do the maternal relations of the bridegroom contribute to his bride-price. Unlike all other Nuba tribes, Dilling has no double exogamy, both with father's and mother's

[1] The Great *kujur* of the master spirit Urtoia is also an exception. He can trace his genealogy through six generations; the incarnations of his spirit were almost completely hereditary.

[2] These payments are only in intention, theoretically, payments to the bride's mother. As women own no property, these gifts are as much her husband's as her own.

clan; it is, in fact, precluded by the moiety system. In the naming of new-born children, too, maternal influence is excluded. The infant is named after some elder relative (alive or dead) of the father or occasionally after one of his friends.

The mother has her first children while still living in her parents' house. Against this, paternal importance in procreation is proclaimed by an extremely severe couvade which duplicates the main phases of the confinement and all the ritual restrictions under which the young mother is placed. The avoidances begin, in a light form, already with pregnancy. From the beginning of pregnancy the prospective father must refrain from digging pits and killing or wounding animals lest it lead to miscarriage, stillbirth, or the birth of a malformed child. Nor may the man shave his head or cut his hair. For eight to ten weeks after the birth (eight if the child is a girl, ten if a boy) the mother is confined to the house. During this period the father observes the rigid couvade: like his wife, he is forbidden to wash his clothes, or to cut his hair; he must not sit on stools or bedsteads, only on the floor, and must not wash; he is allowed to go out, but only for farm work; he must not visit other houses or drink from other peoples' gourds. He shares, in one word, the 'uncleanness' of the woman in confinement.

The position of wives with regard to their moiety and clan membership is not quite easy to define. In social and ritual obligations, wives follow invariably the clan and moiety of their husbands; the rules of widowhood, too, endorse the conception of a 'complete adoption'. But the symbols which surround the act of adoption, and which maintain the consciousness of the social identity, are ambiguous. Thus we find a final marriage ceremony, called *koldogonya*, which centres round a feast and sacrificial meal in the husband's house, at which the wife eats for the first time with her husband, and of food belonging to him: but as in Dilling no general eating avoidances between clans exist, it is doubtful whether this release from a restriction imposed only since the betrothal can signify more than the accomplished marriage union. After the birth of her first child, when the period of seclusion is over and the young mother may dress her hair again, for the first time as married woman, she does so in the style typical of her husband's moiety: but widows beyond child-bearing age abandon this emblem of the group membership which they embraced on marriage and revert to the coiffure of their moiety by birth.

The explanation may be that our alternative categories 'complete' and 'incomplete' adoption of wives are inapplicable to a moiety system. Practically, the absorption into the husband's group may be complete; but the polarity of the exogamous units perhaps forbids that the social identity of wives should become wholly submerged.[1]

[1] We may reflect that the wives in one moiety must always belong to the other; and that the group of origin of wives, constantly recurring, cannot but appear enormously stressed.

Finally, as regards the extension of kinship by adoption and similar devices, I need only say that blood brothership and suchlike bonds do not exist; and that the adoption of slaves into the family was practised on a large scale, but followed closely the Nyima pattern.

Dilling: Marriage

Marriage is forbidden, self-evidently, in the biological family, also between children and the brothers and sisters of their parents (or their widows and widowers), and between parallel cousins. Marriage between cross-cousins, i.e. the children of brother and sister, is allowed. Here we add another unique feature in the Dilling kinship system to those already discussed—'descriptive' terminology and unilateral clan exogamy. Possibly the latter is causally connected with this re-interpretation of incest: reduced to the level of the family group, the permission to marry into the mother's clan becomes the equivalent of the permission to marry one's cross-cousin.[1]

Incestuous marriage, it is maintained, cannot occur. But this denial is weakened by the admission of a supernatural sanction. For one believes that such marriages would be cursed with barrenness. This, to the people, is an additional deterrent: 'Do you marry to have children, or do you marry anyhow?' asked my informants. 'Well, since one marries for the sake of children, no one would break the marriage rules.' Illicit relations in prohibited degrees, equally odious, entail the same sanctions (though these can hardly matter as much in illicit love affairs).

A man may marry several wives from the same clan, but never two sisters. One new marriage prohibition, not vested in kinship, precludes effectively too big differences in the age of husband and wife: no man may marry a daughter of his age mates, i.e. the men with whom he underwent circumcision together.

The Dilling tribe intermarries with the Nyitil and Kurmetti sections of Nyima, and with the neighbouring groups of Mendel, Kudur, and Ghulfan. Dilling men and women who emigrated to other parts freely intermarry with the local people. In Dilling itself marriages within the tribe preponderate. The large majority of men seem to have one wife, though marriage to two or three wives is also frequent. In a polygamous household, the husband divides his attentions evenly among his wives. He sleeps for three successive nights with each wife in turn, or more precisely, in her hut, without necessarily having intercourse.

Both men and women marry comparatively late. I have seen young men of over twenty and girls of perhaps eighteen to nineteen unmarried or only just betrothed. Modern conditions, the constant emigration of young men who become soldiers or labourers, have undoubtedly retarded marriageable age. But many girls nowadays never even attempt to find

[1] Marriage with one type of cross-cousin, the mother-brother's daughter or son, is, of course, marriage into the mother's clan; marriage with the other type of cross-cousin, the father-sister's daughter or son, is potentially (invariably, in some Dilling clans) marriage into the mother's moiety.

a husband, and themselves leave Dilling for the freer and more glamorous life abroad, often to disappear in the large cities and their brothels.

The young man who has fallen in love with a girl and has won her heart will begin his official courtship by making himself agreeable to her father. He will work on the land of his future father-in-law, run errands for him, and render him various minor services. After a time, having thus proved the seriousness of his intentions, the young man will request the girl's hand from her father. The permission obtained, the suitor presents a few small gifts to his bride and her parents—cloth for the former, a garment, coffee, sugar, and tea for the latter. These gifts establish the betrothal as well as the right to consummate the marriage in due course.

The bridegroom now waits till the girl is fully mature (himself being the arbiter), and then sleeps with her in her parents' house, with their full knowledge and approval. No ceremony initiates or surrounds this event. Afterwards the bride's father will demand the bride-price. The bridegroom must pay as much of it as he can at once, but at least two cows; the rest he can pay in the following years. In the year of the consummation he must also make a gift of two basketfuls of simsim and one gourd of cow's fat to the bride's mother, which is the first of a series of similar gifts strung out over the years before the final marriage ceremony.

The bride stays in her parents' home for three to four years, i.e. normally till she has had at least two children. During this time the husband visits her by night, and she visits him by day, helping him occasionally with the house and farm work; but the two continue to live separately, and may not eat or drink together. Finally, the husband builds a new house, ready to receive the bride at the final marriage ceremony of the *koldogonya*. By this time he must have completed the main bride-price payments; after the *koldogonya* he presents a final gift of four goats to his father-in-law and two goats to his mother-in-law.

Only betrothal and final domestic union are marked by ceremonies. Indeed, the consummation alters the status of the bride but little: till the *koldogonya*, the marriage is, though more than betrothal, yet less than full matrimony.[1] It represents, in a sense, a trial period: till the final ceremony, the marriage can be dissolved easily, and the wife can keep her own possessions; afterwards, the dissolution would mean real divorce, difficult to obtain, and entailing the forfeit of the wife's property.

The bride-price, known as *ti*, 'cows', is rigidly standardized. The traditional amount was nine cows and eight goats (including the initial gifts); it was lately reduced by the Government, together with the bride-price of Nyima, to four cows and seven goats. The whole bride-price (save two goats of the final gift) goes to the bride's father. In addition, the bridegroom must deliver twelve basketfuls of simsim

[1] That it is 'more than betrothal' is shown in the adoption, by the bride, of the head-dress of married women after the birth of her first child.

and eight baskets of grain to the bride's mother; this payment is made in annual instalments (of two to four baskets) in the years intervening between betrothal and final marriage ceremony. Eldest sons used to receive the whole, or nearly the whole, bride-price from their fathers; younger sons could count on contributions from their elder, married, brothers, but had to find the rest themselves. To-day the bride-price is nearly always produced by the suitor himself.

Unlike the other Nuba tribes, Dilling has no standardized dowry, save the pots and gourds and clothes which every bride brings into the marriage. Fathers who are well off will send off their daughters with a few gifts. But there is no rule, and these gifts are regarded, not as property, but as food for the young couple (it might last them several months). For example, the bride's father may slaughter a bull and send them the meat, also a ram, a few baskets of simsim and grain, and some honey.

The contributions to the bride-price concern (at best) only the father and elder brother of the bridegroom; in turn, the bride's parents are the only recipients. The 'contractual' aspect of the bride-price, without the enlistment of many witnesses, is thus weakly pronounced.

The identification of the bride-price with a payment for fecundity, on the other hand, is conspicuous. Not only do the people call fertility the main meaning and purpose of marriage, but they also translate this doctrine into terms of financial appreciation. In divorce a substantial deduction from the refundable bride-price is made if the wife had borne her ex-husband even one child: five cows are deducted if the eldest child had been a boy, and four if a girl, irrespective of the total number of children born. These are the traditional figures; the corresponding amounts to-day are three and two. Illegitimate children 'belong to the bride-price', i.e. to the legal father; but he sometimes refuses to have them, in which case the child goes to the mother's father or brother. It may then be bought back, as it were, by the natural father for the same amount which is allowed for children in the bride-price refund, five (three) cows for a boy and four (two) for a girl. The following regulation is even more characteristic. If a girl is seduced and put in the family way before she became betrothed (i.e. before her fecundity had been 'bought'), the child belongs to her people; but the natural father or his family are expected to 'buy' it back for the usual amount. If the natural father neglected to do so, his son or daughter may, when they grow up, demand from him their purchase price which had never been paid—a rather incongruous consequence of the economic assessment of fertility. The child of an unmarried girl would never be adopted by the man whom she might afterwards marry: he would object that he intends to marry 'the girl alone'. The fecundity aspect of bride-price and marriage reveals itself finally in the rigid rules of widowhood. Wives, widowed after the final marriage ceremony, must not leave the family of their late husband. They are not forbidden to have sexual relations with other men: but all children they might bear are, posthumously, their husband's.

The severe punishment of seduction; the appreciation of virginity; and recurrent (though officially discouraged) fights over girl-brides express what I have called the 'possessive' aspect of marriage. Again these sentiments are translated into financial transactions. The seduction of a girl entails a fine or, more correctly, compensation of one cow, which, rather surprisingly, goes to the girl's mother. If the girl had already been engaged (though still a virgin), the punishment is, significantly, heavier: the culprit is fined two cows, one again taken by the girl's mother, the other—a real fine—by the chief. The bridegroom's only redress is to see his rival punished; that he is not allowed to benefit financially from this compensation and fine emphasizes the absolute, disinterested condemnation of the offence. The parents' claim to compensation for the lost virginity of their daughter means possibly that they can hold out some inducement to the paramour to make amends and marry her: for if he does so the compensation is deducted from the bride-price.

This sensitive code seems to accord ill with the present laxity of morals. Yet the two exist side by side—as do the two societies to which they correspond: the Dilling tribe round the hills and out in the plain, and the sprawling town, alien, of mixed population, and without tradition or continuity. The encroachment of urban morality on tribal life has even caused, in reaction, a tightening of the traditional moral code.[1] Let me quote an instance of this impact of the two moralities. A young man whose family lived in one of the outlying hamlets was engaged to a girl of the same locality and had already made the first bride-price payment of two cows. He was a soldier in Dilling. Later he was transferred to Kassala, and, unwilling to leave his bride behind, he wrote home requesting that she should join him. Her father refused, since the bride-price had not yet been completed. Some time afterwards the soldier's brothers called, in his name, on the girl's father and demanded that the betrothal be dissolved and the bride-price returned. The reason given was that the soldier had heard his bride had gone to live on her own in Dilling town, which, he well knew, meant that she was little better than a prostitute. The girl's father would not dispute the justice of the viewpoint (though the girl said: 'It is only because he—the bridegroom—no longer loves me'); he only asked for confirmation by letter from the man himself. He did, however, remove his daughter from the temptations of Dilling and took her home to his village.

Another example: a man had divorced his wife because of her repeated infidelities. The woman had left Dilling and gone off to El Obeid. Two years later the ex-husband, who had not yet received the full refund of the bride-price, sued the woman's father, complaining as much about not having been refunded the bride-price as about the fact that the woman's father, neglectful of his parental duties, let her live in sin in El Obeid. For there she would live with other men, possibly have

[1] See the following section on Divorce.

children by them; certainly no one would marry her: how then could her ex-husband ever hope to recover the bride-price?

Dilling: Widowhood and Divorce

A wife who loses her husband before the final marriage ceremony is free to remarry, either in levirate or outside the late husband's family and clan. In the former case, if the bride-price was still partially unpaid, the brother of the deceased would complete the payments; in the latter case, the second husband would pay the full bride-price, refunding what had been paid by the first husband to the latter's brothers and handing the balance to the widow's father. The children born in the first marriage go to their father-brother. If widowed after the *koldogonya* ceremony, the widow must continue to live in her husband's home till her death. This rule is unaffected by the widow's remarriage in levirate—the only form of remarriage permitted to her. Though the widow is commonly expected to marry a brother of her late husband, no pressure would be exercised. Nor is there any objection to her having illicit relations with other men; but this union must never be recognized as marriage, no bride-price is permissible, and children will belong to the dead husband's family. If the first husband had for some reason failed to complete the bride-price payments when he died, after the *koldogonya*, the widow's father or brothers will insist on being paid the balance either by the brother or son of the deceased. They might wait until the marriage of a daughter of the deceased brought new wealth into the family; but the debt goes no further: if the widow's late husband had no brother, or left no daughter, the debt lapses with his death.

For ten weeks after the death of the husband the widow lives in semi-seclusion, shunned by other people and regarded as impure, much as in Nyima. After one to two years (formerly three to four years) she is allowed to marry again or—if she became widowed after the final marriage ceremony—to resume sexual relations.

As already mentioned, dissolution of the marriage before the *koldogonya* ritual is easy and frequent. The main reason is infidelity, but mere incompatability of tempers, complaints that a wife is 'bad' or a husband neglectful, or that one is 'no longer in love', are equally considered adequate grounds. The reasons are not closely scrutinized; as we have seen, suspicion of immoral conduct is ground enough to demand divorce. In a divorce of this kind the wife takes her personal and farm property with her (i.e. the grain from the house-plot and the simsim which she planted). The husband can claim the full refund of the bride-price, including every gift he made, exclusive only of the deductions for children; the children are his.

After the final marriage ceremony, one is most reluctant to permit a dissolution of the marriage, though appeals for divorce are frequent enough. A study of cases in which divorce was admitted in the past ten to twenty years reveals that only three reasons were accepted as valid:

(1) Incurable disease, especially leprosy.

(2) Mental derangement, which might endanger the lives of husband or wife if they were forced to continue living together.

(3) Violent dislike on the part of husband or wife, possibly paired with mental instability, which would again involve a danger to their lives.

Indeed, often demands for separation follow, or are accompanied by, the threat to kill or commit suicide. The records show that neither threat is to be taken lightly.

Adultery, even repeated infidelity, is not a ground for divorce after the final ceremony. Impotence, a typical ground for divorce, is also admitted in Dilling: but it is unlikely to be cited in this kind of divorce, three to four years after the consummation.

The divorced wife may not take any of her property with her. Of the bride-price the husband can claim only the refund of the cattle (not of the goats, grain, and other gifts), after the deduction for the children. The children belong, again, to the husband.

Now, I must add that these rules could only be formulated after long and difficult case studies. For the first information with which I was confronted was that Dilling custom absolutely forbade divorce after the final marriage ceremony. In fact, I made my acquaintance with Dilling marriage law in the course of a law case in which the rejection by the Native Court of a plea for divorce had caused a hopeless deadlock. This was the case:

The wife of a certain Anur refused, for various reasons, to stay with her husband, and was supported in this attitude by her father. At the first hearing of the case before the Native Court, the husband pleaded for a refund of the bride-price and divorce. The court, however, declined to grant divorce on the grounds that Dilling customary law did not recognize divorce in marriages like Anur's, in which the final ceremony had already been performed. Anur thereupon dropped his claim, insisting merely on the return of his wife. Both the wife and her father refused obstinately, and the woman threatened to kill first her husband and then herself if she were forced to return to him. The court remained equally obdurate, though the court elders did not in the least doubt the seriousness of this threat. Still they would not budge: 'This was the custom.'

Closer investigation into the marriage practice of Dilling showed that the statement of the elders that 'Dilling custom did not recognize divorce' was not quite correct. In this rigid form, the exclusion of divorce was of very recent origin and only dated back to 1938, when the Native Court passed a law, and had it duly registered with the District Commissioner, forbidding divorce. It appears that divorce had been practised on too liberal a scale in recent years, owing to the influence of urban morality. In enacting this law, the elders of Dilling only attempted to re-establish (so they said) an original custom. This statement, too, was found to be somewhat inexact. It was not difficult to prove that divorce had *de facto* been practised and allowed under conditions of traditional

tribal life long before the influence of Dilling town could have made itself felt. Though the original parties to these old divorce suits were mostly dead, witnesses could be found among their surviving relations, and the same elders who had first testified to the impossibility of divorce later produced illuminating data on its occurrence even in the 'good old days'.

On the basis of these records of old divorce cases, the Native Court and I reviewed the present case as well as the whole question of divorce. The court agreed that a modification of their, as they now realized, too inflexible rules was necessary. The elders themselves suggested the amendment that divorce should be allowed if sufficient grounds could be shown, the grounds being those which I enumerated above. Anur's case, which had set the ball rolling, clearly warranted divorce under heading (3). The court decided, and both parties agreed, that the woman's father should refund the bride-price, whereupon the marriage would be dissolved. Yet the mere discussion, and the verbal agreement which we had reached, proved insufficient. For some time afterwards, while I thought that we had settled the whole case, nothing happened. With the first law unhappily committed to paper, the elders were afraid to act lest they broke a law which they themselves had, all too hastily, made. Eventually I diagnosed the trouble, and the amendment, too, was officially recorded and incorporated in the office files.

Dilling: Inheritance

In the inheritance of land the far farms are inherited by the eldest son. House farms, together with the house, go to the youngest son, if he is still unmarried and without a house of his own. His father's widows stay on in the house until he marries, when they will move into newly built single huts in the same compound. If all sons are married at the time of their father's death, the widows will live alone in the house and cultivate the house plots; but the youngest sons remain responsible, look after their mothers, and help them with food or farm work.

Grain left in the granaries is used for the funeral feast, and the rest belongs to whoever is living in the house. Grain standing on the farms, reaped with the help of sons and brothers, belongs to the widows and small children. If the sons are grown up, their mothers may let them have a share, but there is no rule. After the harvest the widows continue to work the house plots, the far farms being taken over by the eldest son.

Livestock, guns, money, are divided among the sons, in accordance with a verbal 'will' which their father communicated to his brothers, friends or neighbours. By this will he can exclude a disobedient son or reward a favourite child. But he cannot leave his property to relations other than sons or to strangers. Only if there are no sons can brothers or possibly brothers' sons claim the inheritance. Daughters have no title to their father's property. The will cannot be contested. The brothers of the deceased, as witnesses and executors, may feel sorry for their

disinherited nephew, but cannot help him. If a man leaves only small children, his brothers will act as trustees; if he has no brothers, he may entrust the property (a gun or livestock) to a friend on the understanding that he will return it (the livestock inclusive of offspring) to the sons when they grow up.[1]

Of personal belongings, ornaments and articles of clothing are inherited by brothers, never by sons. In the *shil-liri* clans tools and weapons are treated like livestock and wealth; in the *uro-niri* moicty, they must be given away to the Great *kujur* of the clan.

Women leave no property save clothing, ornaments, pots, and household utensils. They belong to the woman's husband or daughters-in-law.

Dilling: Adolescence and Adulthood

Dilling has a loose age class system of boys and men whose social effectiveness is now difficult to estimate, partly because the decimation of adolescents through emigration and similar influences has for more than a generation frustrated any coherent organization of youth; and partly because some of the age-grade activities have lapsed (wrestling tournaments, farm co-operation), absorbed by another, new organization, the Arab-modelled *baramka*. What remains of the old age classes are largely symbolic features, the age class names and forms of etiquette. Thus age mates greet each other differently from men belonging to different age classes. In the former case one shakes hands; in the latter, the younger man offers his arm, palm down, to a touch of the hand of the older.[2] Also when entering the house of an age mate one must discard one's sandals and leave them outside the gate. Of more consequential traits we discover two only: the marriage rule mentioned before, forbidding marriage with the daughters of age mates, and circumcision.

Young boys up to the age of ten or twelve are known as *shirin*. At this age they are circumcised, and known afterwards as *bereri erin*. The circumcision is performed in the harvest season. All the boys of suitable age from a number of localities are collected together, and a grass hut is built just outside the settlement, where they will spend the period of segregation which follows circumcision. The operation, performed by men experts, is in no way secret; but during the following fortnight the boys must not be seen by strangers, especially not by girls or women, save their own mothers, who bring them their food. The release from the seclusion is not surrounded by any ceremony; only the circumcision of an eldest son involves a simple ritual act, an offering of milk and corn gruel to the *genadi* and thus, indirectly, the clan spirit.

The boys who were circumcised in the same year (though not necessarily together) are known as *bekena* and constitute the age-grade groups.

[1] This resorting to friends for trustees reflects the narrow compass of the Dilling kinship system: outside the biological family, no difference is made between distant relations and mere friends.

[2] Similarly, the special salute with which one must approach a *kujur* is modified in the case of the *kujur's* age-grade fellows.

We find no special age-grade feasts or ceremonies; the age fellows act (or used to act) in a body in the collective farm labour which they organize, and in the seasonal ceremonies of the tribe; here they would appear together at dances, form a single team in wrestling or in certain phases of the rituals, and eat and drink together.

The remaining age classes are but vaguely defined. Some years after the circumcision, when the young men are betrothed, but have not yet taken their brides into their house, they are called *horan*. Afterwards they are known as *shal martin* ('house-owners'?).

In the adolescence of the women, which runs a smooth and almost changeless course from childhood to marriage, we need mention only one major event—circumcision. The Dilling people practise clitoridectomy, but perform the operation at an unusual time of life—shortly before the woman gives birth to her first child or, if she is childless, before she moves into her husband's home. The people are most insistent that this type of female circumcision should be distinguished from that practised in other tribes. When I once, by a slip of the tongue, spoke of Dilling girls being circumcised, I was at once sharply corrected. The women, especially, explained with great emphasis that no circumcision of girls existed in Dilling: 'We circumcise only women who have already lain with men.' No further explanation could be produced. I cannot go more deeply into this question, which is complicated by certain *tabus* linked with this female circumcision. But they as well as the strongly stressed connexion with marriage suggest an explanation—namely, that the clitoridectomy here has the meaning of a second defloration, symbolic of intensified wifehood.

A few words about the institution which has to some extent replaced the age-grade organization of Dilling, the *baramka*. It is joined by both men and women, different localities forming separate *baramka* groups. The *baramka* is best described as a 'mutual aid society' whose tasks are both utilitarian and recreational: it provides collective labour for farm work on the land of its members; the members also attend one another's family ceremonies—weddings or funerals—and gather regularly at tea and coffee parties. In the recreational no less than the utilitarian activities, the *baramka* plays the part which the age-grade organization used to play: *baramka* fellows instead of age mates now join in the celebration of family events; tea parties have replaced age-grade feasts; even the grass sheds in which the age grades used to meet have disappeared.

Men and women form different groups, which co-operate, however, in collective farm work. Membership is voluntary; but once one has become a member, attendance of the various group events is compulsory. Failure to join in the farm co-operation involves a fine of two to three piastres. The *baramka* organization implies a number of offices modelled on the modern political administration of the country: they are headed by a *sheikh* (*sheikha*, in the women's groups), whose main duties are the organization of farm co-operation, and the arrangement of the *baramka*

parties, to the costs of which each member contributes ½ piastre, the *sheikh* buying the wherewithals. *Sheikh* and *sheikha* also preside over the court sessions in which defaulters are accused and fined. The head of the group is always a man or woman of friendly temper, liked by everyone, and known for his (or her) hospitality. Then there are the lower ranks: *Nazir*, *Omda*, and a 'sergeant' and 'corporal', who act as 'police', collecting fines and producing culprits; there is even a fellow representing the *musika*: he blows his horn to signal the hours of co-operative farm work and carries the 'flag' of the group, a bandana handkerchief tied to a stick. Lately the *baramka* of Dilling, once very numerous, have decreased in number, owing to the less favourable economic conditions.[1]

It is interesting to watch the *baramka* court sessions: they are carried out most realistically, in full earnest and with impressive dignity. Long speeches are made, and there is no doubt that the people enjoy this play-acting tremendously. The make-believe goes so far that the fines of two to three piastres are always referred to as so many pounds to make them sound more realistic. Perhaps in this play-acting, too, the *baramka* becomes the heir of the age-grade organization, though in a somewhat distorted sense. The age-grades, as we have so often seen, emphasize and mirror in their own organization the social and political structure into which adolescents must grow. Where they mould loyalties and sentiments of commonness, the *baramka* borrows the externals of the existing system; where the former prepare and build up, the latter merely copies.

[1] They have maintained themselves in the outlying hamlets and districts, and also in the related group of Kaduru.

CHAPTER XI

KOALIB, NYIMA, DILLING
(*continued*)

Spirit Cult

IN the description of the shamanistic cult in these three tribes, I must limit myself to a brief outline. Of its psychological aspects, especially, I have treated more fully elsewhere.[1] Like the classical shamanism of North America and Central Asia, the spirit cult of these Nuba tribes centres round individuals capable of producing a state of trance and mental dissociation which is interpreted as spirit possession. This trance may come upon them spontaneously and involuntarily; more often it is self-induced, at certain ceremonial occasions, or upon the request of clients who come to seek their help. In trance, the spirit-possessed 'talks in tongues'—that is, speaks with the voice of the spirit, prophesies the future, cures disease, and divines events hidden from human knowledge, like crimes committed secretly or by unknown offenders.

The Koalib call both the spirit and its human vessel *bayel*; the Nyima, *kuni*; in Dilling, as we have heard, the spirit is known as *uro* and its medium as *kujur*. This last name, which has spread very widely, is now used by all three tribes (as well as many other Nuba groups);[2] we shall adopt it in the following as an equivalent of *shaman* to avoid the equivocal use of *bayel* and *kuni* for both spirits and spirit priests.

The vocation of the *kujur* is heralded by dreams and visions, and by spontaneous evidence of that abnormal mentality which the old men of the tribe or established *kujurs* would identify as manifestations of spirits. At first these manifestations are interpreted as representing a tentative stage, during which the spirit is testing its future vessel; when they repeat themselves and reveal more and more convincingly the prophetic and other miraculous gifts flowing from spirit-possession, they are taken as proof that the spirit has at last chosen its incarnation. The *kujur* then undergoes certain rituals of initiation and consecration, which confirm him in his priesthood and seal the bond between spirit and man. Now the spirit can no longer abandon its human vessel nor the latter refuse himself to the spirit.

The spirit-possessed individual, whether consecrated or not, is approached with all signs of reverence and awe. A special gesture of greeting is prescribed, which is common to the three tribes: one must enter the presence of a *kujur* bareheaded; one bows low and lays one's

[1] See *Sudan Notes and Records*, vol. xxiv, 1941.

[2] The term *kujur* is, in fact, also used, quite incorrectly, for other types of tribal priests, e.g. grain priests, rain-makers, medicine men, &c. (*see* my article in *Sudan Notes and Records*).

hands on his knees or legs; the *kujur* then touches the arms or head of his visitor, as if to bless him.

The rituals of consecration differ considerably in the three tribes. In Koalib consecration follows very soon after the first tentative manifestations, and fairly young men may become full *kujurs*. In Nyima, the final consecration happens late in life, when the shaman has for many years already acted as a vessel of the spirit. At this ceremony he assumes the insignia of his office—iron bangles and spiral cuffs, and a ceremonial throwing knife, called *dulan*. Until then the shaman was known as *kuni di koydi*, a man 'possessed by the spirit'; afterwards, he is entitled to the name *kujur*.[1] The Dilling conception lays down no rule as to the age of *kujurs* or the length of time which must elapse between the early manifestations and the attainment of full priesthood. The two are, however, more sharply distinguished than in the other groups. During the first period the spirit appears irregularly in different individuals; with the final consecration, it becomes bound to one human vessel. After the consecration rites, which are long and complex, and (logically, in this social structure) involve the whole community, the *kujur* is presented with the insignia of spirit priestship: a small ostrich feather, rings and bangles, and a carved stool on which he must sit during the spirit seances. Now he becomes known as the Great *kujur* or *koton gujur*, 'Priest of the Stool'. His life stands under certain ritual rules: he lives up on the hill, alone with his family; he must not walk down into the village or sit in other people's houses; and he must obey, more strictly than others, the seasonal food avoidances of the tribe.[2]

A clan in Dilling, then, may show any number of 'small *kujurs*', but only one Great *kujur*; and once the latter takes office all the other, irregular manifestations must disappear. There is an exception: the master-spirit Urtora is now incarnated in two great *kujurs* at the same time. This is the second twin incarnation; the first, four generations ago, was in two brothers. The present men are not biologically related, but the people speak of them as 'twins', for, like twins, they share, in two bodies, one spirit life.

In all three tribes the consecration of a *kujur* is celebrated on an impressive scale. It implies the willingness of whole groups (kinship groups, clans, local sections), not only to offer themselves as a congregation, but also partly to co-operate economically, with gifts and labour. The expenses, in particular, of the various sacrifices and feasts are heavy. Borne largely by the friends and relations of the future *kujur*, they render his consecration dependent on the goodwill of others. The accident of spirit-possession is thus in no small measure controlled by public opinion.

[1] *Kuni di koydi* means literally 'mounted by a spirit'. Spirit-possession is consciously likened to being 'mounted', as a horse is mounted by his rider (cp. *mordu koyidi*, 'a person mounted on a horse', i.e. a rider). The term *kujur* is most probably not indigenous in Nyima. The original expression, now hardly used in this sense, is *abadiya*, 'grandfather', which is also the term by which *kujurs* address or refer to their spirits.

[2] *See* pp. 422 and 459.

The convincingness of the call still needs the backing of another, more rational, assessment: whether the *kujur*-to-be is likeable as a man, a worthy candidate, a useful leader. In Dilling, where the Great *kujur* is selected from a number of candidates, this viewpoint is expressed most clearly. A certain 'small *kujur*', for example, who had long acted as a spirit vessel and would have passed on his magic qualifications, could never find sufficient support among the people for his final consecration because of his personal faults: he was lazy, a spendthrift, a bad and—what was even more to his discredit—an unlucky farmer. On the other hand, the unorthodox appointment of the twin *kujurs* of Urtora was largely due to the insistence of the two families to see each its own man enthroned as Great *kujur*.

Here we touch upon the wider problem of the ethical background of the spirit cult. It must remain outside this discussion. We cannot probe here into the complicated relations between group morality and this cult of visionaries and psychopathics. Nor could these relations be reduced to a simple formula. Let me only state what is, in the people, the dominant tendency—or desire—to believe: that the spirit powers are in themselves good, or morally neutral, but that they may become evil in the hands of evil men, unlucky in the hands of hapless men.

I have spoken of the 'abnormal mentality' of *kujurs*: indeed spirit-possession, specially in its early stage of spontaneous manifestations, is strongly suggestive of psycho-pathological symptoms—of incipient insanity or epileptic fits. Psychologically, the genuine possession is an hysterical attack, which is capable of producing all the typical symptoms: the trance-like state, dissociation, pseudo-epileptic attacks. The spirit presence, constantly felt by the young *kujur*, his dreams and visions fraught with spirit-symbolism, could be read as symptoms of neurosis. How far the trance and dissociation exhibited by the Nuba shaman are genuine, and how far a neurotic mentality is a prerequisite of this vocation, are questions which I must for the moment leave unanswered. I may say that the people are well aware of this resemblance of spirit-possession and the symptoms of mental derangement. There exist borderline cases in which one cannot be certain whether a certain abnormality of behaviour indicates one or the other. Such cases are taken to established *kujurs*, who will be able to diagnose the nature of the affliction. But in principle, mental derangement and spirit-possession represent fundamentally different things, though it is admitted that insanity may result from the latter: in Nyima and Dilling one knows of the existence of spirits of such unrestrained and malevolent force that no man could remain sane (or alive) on whom they descended. If this dangerous nature of spirits is known, one will avoid their reincarnation, withholding from them the sanction of the consecration rites. The spirit Urwartne in Dilling is said to have remained unincarnated for this reason. Yet spirits are also known to be concerned with the cure of lunacy, and their *kujurs* to be experts in the treatment of mental disease.

The three tribes conceive differently of the spirit world. The Koalib *bayel*, mysterious, vaguely anthropomorphous, of unknown origin and habitat, appears unaccountably in human beings, to disappear again at the death of its vessel. Some spirits have chosen reincarnation in successive generations of the same family. But new spirits, not previously embodied, are also constantly appearing. Of the firm bond between spirit and clan in Dilling we have already spoken. The spirit belief in Nyima is the most complex. The majority of the *kuni* spirits have been incarnated before, often in times long past. Some, reappearing generation after generation in the same kinship group, have become almost hereditary spirits. But this line of hereditary incarnations may break at any moment, for no known reason, as it is known to have done in the past. For spirits may seek successive incarnations in different families, clans and communities, even in different tribes. A *kuni* may thus disappear from view for long periods, possibly for ever. But often the most erratic incarnations can be traced, and these past careers of spirits offer an inexhaustible topic for discussion. At the same time, new *kuni* also appear, some the sons or brothers of known spirits, others complete strangers. Many are credited with great powers. Some years ago a spirit which went by the modest name of 'The Whole World' appeared in the chief of Nyima. None of the old men whom the chief consulted could identify the spirit or make suggestions as to its origin or nature. It was listed as a new spirit, of unprecedented and, in a sense, unfathomable faculties. In the dreams in which the spirit first revealed itself it appeared associated with motor cars, telegraph poles, District Commissioners, and other emblems of Western civilization: which suggested to the chief that the spirit might conceivably be of British origin.[1] As everyone felt, a fitting spirit for a Government chief and ex-soldier.

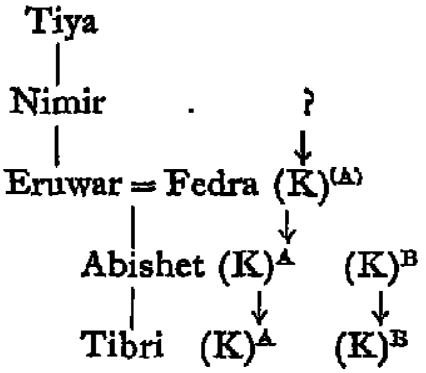
The same individual may have many *kuni*, which need not be related nor of the same kind: some may be reincarnations, others new spirits. The Nyima distinguish, besides, different categories of *kuni* spirits. A first is closely akin to the Koalib *bayel*, though Nyima mythology paints a more detailed picture of the spirit universe. These *kuni* are said to descend upon man from the sky; like the *bayel*, they have led a spirit existence since the beginning of the world. A second category are the souls (*dwe*) of human beings, turned into *kuni* after death. A third, of little importance, comprises local genii and suchlike, spirits of rocks and trees or also animals, which came under the mastery of man.

To return to the *kuni* spirits which were once men: they are figures from the remote past, the heroes of tribal mythology, whom tradition credits with great cultural feats such as the introduction of circumcision, the creation of a religious rite, or the founding of new groups and settlements. Their spirits are still masters of the magic knowledge from

[1] To be exact, the chief merely presented the evidence to me in such a fashion that I was bound to draw this conclusion. When I suggested it, tentatively, he replied comfortably: 'This is what I always thought.'

which these achievements have inevitably sprung, and their *kujurs* (if they happen to be incarnated), the guardians of the heritage. In one case, a striking exception, the *kuni* is derived from a real person, the hero of recent history. His claim to greatness might be called controversial and possibly a challenge: he is the famous Agemna, the 'Sultan' of Nyima at the time of the punitive patrol (1917–18), which ended in his capture and execution. He reappeared as a spirit, about three years ago (1937), incarnated in one of his brothers. I have witnessed manifestations of this spirit during a great ceremonial gathering: though of violent nature, they were concerned only with pronouncements on ritual procedure and did in no way reflect the political antecedents of this incarnation. Whether or not it will grow into another guardianship of tribal heritage (which would better be dead and forgotten) remains to be seen.

Let me illustrate the hereditary incarnation of a *kuni* by the genealogy of a famous *kujur*, Abishet (arabicized, Abu Zed) of Salara. We notice that his spirit appeared as a 'new' spirit three generations ago, and was first inherited through the mother. Abishet had two *kuni* spirits (marked A and B in the diagram), the spirit which he inherited—whose name was Saleh—and another, lesser spirit, newly acquired, which is believed to be Saleh's son. The present *kujur*, Tibri, inherited both father- and son-spirit. The (K) behind the name signifies the possession of a *kuni*.



Spirits thus have names, often a past, always individualities, the latter made up of their quasi-human temperament and, above all, their varying magic powers. This spirit identity is revealed by the spirits themselves, in the visions and through the inspired pronouncements of their vessels. Or the old men of the tribe and other *kujurs*, repositories that they are of spirit lore, might recognize inherited spirits by their manifestations. Finally, their kind becomes visible in the magic feats of which their priests are capable.

In Dilling, the spirit identity is largely pre-ordained. The spirit universe of Koalib shows little variation. The spirits are more or less powerful, and given to manifestations of greater or lesser intensity and violence. But their magic faculties are hardly differentiated and specialized. They are mainly healers, diviners, and the avengers of wrongs. They would discover the cause of misfortunes or of a mysterious

disease in some hidden guilt: a ritual negligence (e.g. in funeral ceremonies) which has angered the dead; or perhaps an offence against kinship laws (blood feud avoidances and suchlike), committed in a previous generation and unknown to the people now living. Or they might diagnose the ill-will of another person whom you have harmed, wittingly or unwittingly. In turn, you can appeal to a shaman to help you obtain your revenge by sending the same punishment—illness and misfortune—to those who have harmed you. The spirits uphold, in every act, a moral universe, in which guilt and ill-luck are cause and effect.

In Nyima the spirit individuality is more fluid than in Dilling and more widely varied than in Koalib. In some *kuni* spirits the faculties of the *bayel* repeat themselves, though partly more specialized; there exists, for example, a Nyima *kujur* who is an expert (highly paid) in the treatment of one disease—epilepsy. Then there are the *kuni* of human origin, which are guardians of tribal cults, or guardian spirits of the Nyima hills (with 'hill priests' as *kujurs*). Other spirits are concerned with the fertility of the land or the fecundity of women. A few, the most important in the political life of the tribe, control war and victory; their *kujurs* used to prophesy the outcome of battles and counsel the warriors, and could claim part of the booty as their due.

The list of existing incarnations does not cover the whole range of spirit magic. The potential appearance of new spirits means also the possibility of new, unprecedented magic faculties. It is one of the essential features of this visionary cult that its revelations and magic claims must remain in some measure unpredictable. Even the pre-ordained spirit universe of Dilling admits, as we have seen, of new departures.

In Koalib, spirit incarnations have increased strikingly during the last generation. The same seems true of Nyima. The situation in Dilling is more difficult to judge. The permanent incarnations, in Great *kujurs*, are at present at a low ebb: only three Great *kujurs* exist, the twin incarnations of Urtora and the incarnation of the 'alien' spirit, Uronkit. But their small number does not reflect the incidence of spirit-possession as such; rather on the contrary. The irregular, temporary manifestations in 'small *kujurs*' seem to be on a very large and probably increasing scale; involving greater competition for the position of the Great *kujur*, this fact may well delay and hinder the final consecration.[1]

The spreading of spirit-possession seems intimately linked with modern development. It represents, in fact, a direct reaction to culture change. Three main factors stand out. First, the radical cultural changes which these tribes are undergoing must foster, here as everywhere, repressions and neurotic tendencies, that mental instability in which spirit-possession has its roots. Secondly, culture change means also the abandonment of

[1] I recorded two instances in which the appointment of Great *kujurs* is still impossible because the people could not agree which of the rival incarnations to recognize as the permanent embodiment of the spirit.

traditional customs and rules of conduct; it must strengthen the fear (largely subconscious) of the hidden guilt behind human misfortunes and thus the dependence on the shaman, who alone can divine it and conjure it away. Finally, new problems of life, new difficulties and perplexities are constantly arising, and with them the need of supernatural guidance and comfort. Partly these problems are already a generation old, like the great increase in crimes committed by persons unknown which has followed the opening up of the country: think of the modern method of herding cattle far from the settlements, or the coming and going of strangers. Partly the problems are new in the full sense of the word. Thus *kujurs* spring up in new surroundings—barracks and soldiers' camps; young Dilling and Nyima soldiers in El Obeid, for the first time in their lives long separated from family and country, are always consulting their *kujur* comrades to learn about the people at home; a policeman in Dilling, having shot and killed an escaped prisoner who was a fellow tribesman, ran to a *kujur* to learn from him the expiation duties involved in that tangled case. These individual perplexities and unpredictable needs demand the magic help, itself individual and of fluid and unbounded range, which shamanism offers in ever-increasing measure.

But the magic domain of shamanism is bounded in one sense: one form of supernatural intervention is beyond the reach of mere *kujurs*—the mastery of rain and of the seasons. It is vested in the special priestly office of the rain-maker, the *neleny* of Koalib and *shirra* of Nyima. In Nyima, this sacred office is completely divorced from the spirit cult, its visionary experiences, and its principle of incarnation. In Koalib, the spirit beliefs also colour the conception of rain magic: the *neleny* can practise the same magic as the Koalib *kujur*, though in his hands it would be infinitely stronger; like the *kujur*, he is the vessel of a spirit. But the two priestly offices are also clearly distinguished: the *neleny* spirit descends only on men of mature age, and it reveals itself by a unique sign: one night the rain-maker-to-be will awake from his sleep to find a cotton thread tied mysteriously round his right wrist.

In Nyima as in Koalib, the office of the rain-maker is hereditary—more strictly in Nyima, where it passes from father to eldest son, than in Koalib, where the successor may be found among brothers or several sons. It is independent of the accidents of spirit-possession. Its magic is not merely lent to man by the unpredictable visitation of spirits: it is embodied in clan and lineage by a primordial law of creation. As it is concerned with eternal regularities—the change of seasons—so the office is itself regular, pre-ordained, and fulfils itself in the priestship of annual rites rather than occasional acts of magic help. It stands on a different plane from spirit-possession—higher and of wider reach. It governs, not the local community among which accident has placed a spirit incarnation, but the whole tribe. It thus offers a focus for the self-consciousness of this widest unit and, potentially, a nucleus for tribal

consolidation. We shall see that it is utilized in this sense in the political structure of these groups.

Dilling, we know, possesses no such spiritual counterpart to the *kujur*. But in a sense kingship occupies a similar position. It is hereditary; the king's clan, like the clan of *neleny* and *shirra*, stands apart from the other clans of the group; the king is one, the *kujurs* many. Although he holds no specific magic powers, his office is sacred and his ritual co-operation indispensable for the tribal ceremonies. He can never be a *kujur* himself, but he shares certain of the attributes of the spirit priests—their insignia of office (bangles, rings, the sacred stool), their avoidances, and largely their rites of consecration. Many of the features which make the rain-maker a focus of tribal consciousness thus reappear in the kingship of Dilling. One essential difference remains: the office of the rain-maker becomes a focus of tribal unity because it owns a unique, vital magic; the kingship is such a 'focus' in its own right; its sacredness merely reflects the spiritual universe, but does not add to it.

Chieftainship

Kingship in Dilling goes back to the beginning of tribal memory; Koalib chieftainship appears to have been founded in the recent past; Nyima is still close to the level of 'stateless' societies: traditional political control was largely diffuse and rudimentary, and rose to conscious unitary leadership only in tasks of war. We find, then, three political structures of varying reach and distinctness. But they cannot be placed in an order of gradual evolution. For each society represents, not only a different stage, but also a different solution of chieftainship. In Koalib it evolved from that tribal ambassadorship which we know under the name of the 'Chief of the Path'. In Nyima the leadership grew out of magic control over the fate of the people. In Dilling it is a kingship 'by the grace of God', and little else.

The chiefs of Koalib, called *kweleny* (as in Heiban and Otoro), are chiefs of hill communities. They appear first in genealogies three generations ago, which is as far back as the Koalib genealogies will take you. But the people are positive that no chiefs existed before that time. The nature of Koalib chieftainship, moreover, allows us to date its beginnings. They coincide with the invasion of the country by the Arabs during or shortly before the Mahdist régime, and chieftainship itself arose as a result of the feuds and battles between the two races. In face of the constant slave-raids of the Arabs, the Koalib communities rallied round powerful leaders. The situation seems to have demanded less a military leadership than the creation of the office of a tribal ambassador who could treat with the enemy, arrange about ransom for captives, and conclude alliances and pacts of friendship.

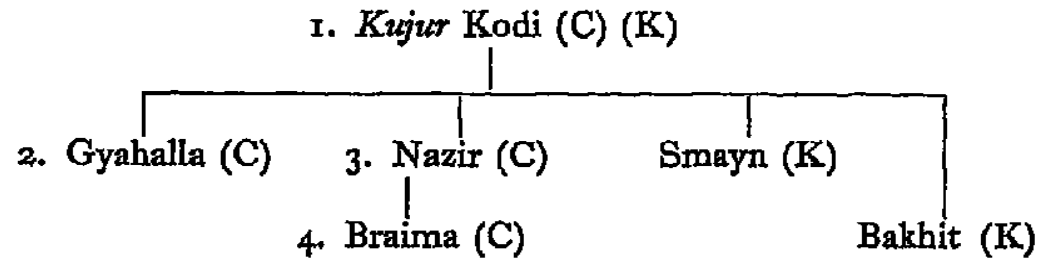
The history of Delami may serve as an instance. A certain *kujur* Kodi was the first Chief of the Path (*kweleny kweti tay*). He concluded

a pact of friendship with Kortala, and later with the Togiya Arabs, and these two tribes would come to the aid of Delami whenever it was attacked by other Arab groups. Once they also helped the Delami people when elephants invaded their country; for the Nuba had no horses and no weapons to hunt big game. One great battle with the Arabs looms largely in the memory of the people: it happened when hostile Arabs of the Arawgi tribe, thirty horses strong, attacked the Koalib of Delami. Fortunately, their Togiya friends were near; though they had only fifteen horses, they managed to defeat the Arawgi, to kill two men and capture seven horses, with the loss of only one man, and to drive them away for good.

The pact of friendship between Kortala and Delami was sworn on the persons of two *kujurs* who represented the tribes. The pact with the Togiya Arabs was concluded, for the Koalib, by their *kujur*; for the Arabs, by their *Nazir*: the Koalib swore on the Koran, the Arab on the person of the *kujur*. The need of a supernatural sanction behind this office of an ambassador and peacemaker, whose person must be inviolable and whose word sacred, explains that it was first entrusted to a priest. Chieftainship became hereditary. But in the second generation already secular and priestly office were separated and vested in two brothers. It appears that the leadership of the Chief of the Path soon developed into political rule proper. The chief assumed control also of the internal affairs of the group and claimed as his prerogative the maintenance of law and order and the prosecution of offenders. Some informants maintain that these pre-Government chiefs already levied a small tribute from the family heads in their group, paid in goats and honey; but this information is rather vague and possibly incorrect.[1] With the broadening of political authority, then, and its assumption of the more specific tasks of government, temporal and spiritual powers were divided. They remained interdependent, however. In judging offenders or settling disputes, the chief needed the co-operation of the *kujur*: the latter's paraphernalia served as instruments of ordeal, and oaths would be taken on his sacred person. This interdependence is stressed by the kinship link between the two offices, which must be vested in brothers or descendants of brothers. The priestly office which is thus bracketed with chieftainship gains a new significance. The *kujur* who became the first Chief of the Path attained this position presumably on account of his superior magic powers. The new chief's *kujur* owes his appointment, not or not only to his priestly qualifications, but primarily to the fact of his descent. His office, like the chief's, is dynastic. In turn, it perpetuates the sanction of sacredness behind the secular authority.

The following genealogy shall illustrate the succession to the twin office of chief and chief's *kujur* in Delami. The numbers indicate the order of succession; (C) behind the name means chief, (K) *kujur*.

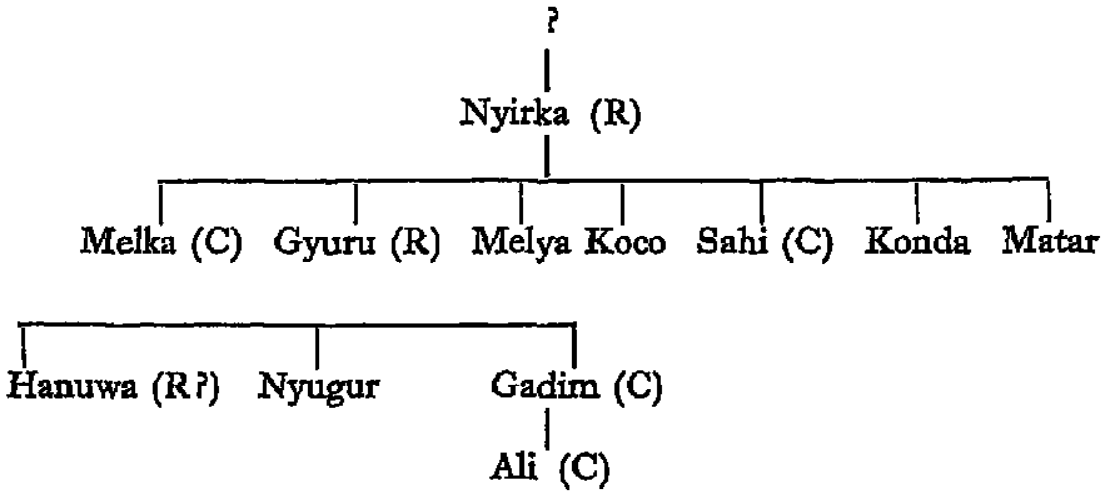
[1] According to other informants, these tributes only came into being when the chiefs became tributary to the present Government.



We see that the hereditary succession is not rigid, but includes sons and younger brothers as well as brother-sons. It is perhaps inevitable that there should be an occasional interregnum in the spirit incarnations, which would leave chieftainship for a time without its priestly twin office. This happened, for example, in the community of Karnak. Since the brother *kujur* of the last chief died, no new incarnation has yet appeared. The present chief avails himself for the time being of the services of another *kujur* in his clan, though of different lineage, until the spirit (or a spirit) will again descend upon a member of his house.

I must add that the original identity of secular and spiritual office which is typical of Delami chieftainship is not universal in Koalib. In certain smaller communities (e.g. Karnak) the first *kweleny* was not a *kujur* as well; but he was already brother to a *kujur*: the secular leadership and its spiritual counterpart emerged together. These communities are said to have been originally under the chiefs of Delami and to have split off later as independent local groups. Genealogies prove that their first chiefs appeared a generation or two later than in Delami. Whether or not this later and derived origin of local chieftainship also explains its appearing on the scene already separated from the spiritual office we must leave undecided.

In Dere, the community of the rain-maker, priestship and chieftainship are again divided between two brothers or men of the same family, though in a new and more subtle fashion. The people of Dere have preserved very complete myths of the origin of rain magic and its first appearance on earth. I cannot go into these legends, but I will quote the sentence with which an old informant concluded his tale: 'From that day on there was a *neleny* (rain-maker) in Dere; and whenever something happened (a quarrel or crime), the people went to the *kweleny* (chief) and asked him to settle the dispute.' I asked: 'Was then this first ancestor of yours *kweleny* and *neleny* in one, or were the two separate?' 'He was both', was the answer. This mythological identity still slips into explanations, and the people would use the two terms 'chief' and 'rain-maker' as synonyms. But this conception is not borne out by the concrete genealogies. Of the man with whom the known pedigree begins, Nyirka, who lived in pre-British times, it is already said that while he ruled as rain-maker his eldest son acted as *kweleny*. How this division was carried through the subsequent generations of the rain-maker dynasty is shown in the following genealogy: (R) means rain-maker; (C) chief (*kweleny*):



The twin offices of chief and rain-maker are not, like those of chief and *kujur*, two streams from the same source: rather they are source and stream. The powers of the Dere *kweleny*, every right and duty which he enacts, flow from the *neleny* priestship. Through the spirit whose embodiment he is, the rain-maker has omniscience; he can send supernatural punishment—death through lightning. Ordeals, divination, oaths fall completely within the domain of priestly activities. But even when the chief, in his secular capacity, would force a thief to give up his loot or warring clans to bury their feud, he would do so by an authority which is his only in reflection. The Dere chief was also a leader in war: but before the men went into battle it would fall to the rain priest to bless them and promise them victory. In this sense, then, chieftainship and priestship might indeed be spoken of as one. The chief himself is called an agent and 'messenger' of the rain-maker. He is, in fact, only one among several such agents; the others, again brothers or brother-sons, are concerned with the ritual, as he is with the secular aspect of the *neleny* magic. The rain-maker is dependent on agents and messengers since he himself is barred from the execution of many of his acts of office; rigid rules forbid him, once he has been consecrated, to leave his house. Moreover, the magic of the rain-maker remains largely effective also when no *veleny* exists in the flesh. It is symbolized and enshrined in ritual paraphernalia, to be invoked in periods of interregnum by his agents, ritual and secular.

Originally, the rain-maker chiefs of Dere were, like the other chiefs of the country, only the heads of their hill community, and the relations of Dere with the other local groups were much like those which obtained everywhere in Koalib. Dere had pacts of friendship with some communities (Delami, and also Laro and Kortala), and was at war with others (Umbre, Karnak). At the same time, the office of the rain-maker implied a spiritual authority which transcended the bounds of the single community. For his seasonal rites were believed to benefit the tribe at large, and in time of drought people from everywhere would appeal to him. His ordeals and powers of divination would equally be invoked

by other communities.[1] The rain-maker could claim a certain tribute from the hunters of Dere—the skins of leopards, a piece of giraffe hide, the tails of monkeys, &c.; but occasionally hunters from other communities, too, would offer these gifts as a voluntary expression of their allegiance. This wider scope of the *neleny* office is expressed strikingly in the ceremony of consecration, in the course of which the newly appointed rain-maker would tour the whole country, visiting each community, friend and enemy alike—Delami, Umbre, Nyukur, and even the allied tribes, Laro and Kortala. In the political unification of Koalib country envisaged by the Government, this supreme authority is to come to full fruition, in the person of a paramount chief of the rain-maker dynasty.

With the establishment of modern administration, the twin offices have moved apart. The duties of the secular ruler became both more numerous and more fully duties in their own right. Collection of taxes, tours of inspection, court meetings, fully occupy the modern chief and have little to do with the reflected magic powers of the *kweleny* of old. Indeed, the chief's office has come to be recognized as independent and *sui generis*: a chief wants a 'different head', the people say. At the time of the British occupation Gyuru was rain-maker, and his brother Melka his 'messenger'; neither was officially recognized by the Government. Melka was succeeded by another brother, Sahi, who was later appointed sub-chief of Dere (*Omda*) by the Government. After Sahi's death a man of the rain-maker clan but of a different family, Absadu, became *Omda*. Some time afterwards the Government discovered the existence of the 'great *kujur*' in Dere (for whom the rain-maker was mistaken), and decided to make a man of this 'ruling house' paramount chief of Koalib. Gyuru had died, and the *neleny* spirit had not yet reappeared. The people elected Gadim, a son of Gyuru, their chief, not because he was a likely successor to the priestship, but because 'he had the head for a chief'. When Gadim had been chief for seven years he was visited by the dreams and visions which usually herald the reincarnation of the *neleny* spirit. He died before all the signs and portents had materialized (e.g. the miraculous cotton bracelet) and before the spirit had possessed him fully. In a sense, even this tentative reincarnation was unexpected. It is explained thus: *neleny* spirits are fond of descending on the most important man in the family; having become a Government chief, Gadim must have attracted the fancy of the spirit. Actually, an elder brother of Gadim, Hanuwa, had been thought the most likely next incarnation: he was of suitable age (about fifty), he had been the ritual assistant of Gyuru and remained in charge of the spirit shrine after Gyuru's death. This familiarity of spirit and man seems an essential prerequisite of spirit-possession. 'The spirit will get used to Hanuwa', is still the general

[1] In an adultery case which occurred in Delami, the accused offered to prove his innocence by taking the oath on the rain-maker; this supreme test was accepted by the litigants as well as the local chief.

verdict. As yet, however, fifteen years since Gyuru's death, there has been no new incarnation.

Now young Ali, Gadim's son, is the chief-elect of Koalib. He has been educated in a Government school and kept for some years away from his country, which, everyone agrees, is a wise policy. Though the capriciousness of spirits precludes any exact prognosis, the people consider it unlikely that Ali would become the next *neleny*. At least it would be undesirable. This is now their confirmed opinion: 'The man whom the *Hakuma* (Government) makes a chief must work hard; he is always moving about and touring the country. But a rain-maker must sit in his house. His work is heavy; it does not allow him to do anything else. For the spirit wants to possess him wholly.'

Like the Koalib *neleny*, the Nyima rain-maker owns powers of divination and of supernatural punishment; he can give or withhold victory; and his spiritual authority embraces, in the same ambiguous fashion, the whole people, without yet entailing full tribal unity. His office binds the people more strongly together: the religious rites of Nyima are consciously focused on the person of the rain-maker, through offerings and ritual obligations; moreover, behind all the rulings which he might issue stands the supreme sweeping sanction of stopping the rain. The people paint a dramatic picture of the *shirra* in wrath, who would exclaim: 'There are those who disobey me; no longer will I be rain-maker.'

Yet the binding powers which the rain-maker used to wield were one-sided. Apart from the religious allegiance, he only claimed the direction of collective actions against outside groups. He would order or forbid attacks on other tribes: but he would ignore the other, no less vital, aspect of collective existence—internal peace. His attitude was one of complete passivity: the hill communities of Nyima frequently attacked each other—without his blessing, yet also without his veto. He recognized the internal unity of the tribe only negatively, by not endorsing the evidence of dissension.

Nor could his authority prevent attempts at breaking away even from this loose unity. The supremacy of the *shirra* was purely spiritual. The unpredictable trend of spirit-possession might at any moment throw up rival leaders whose visions held the promise of equal or greater spiritual powers. It was less a rivalry of men (who would still be bound by the law), than of inspired prophets (law-givers themselves). The collective actions of each hill community were guided by the war *kujurs* of whom we have already spoken. Again, their counsel referred only to intertribal wars, and neither sanctioned nor forbade feuds between sections of the tribe. These local leaders were supposed to collaborate with the *shirra*, and to advise attacks and raids only with his approval. They must also offer him a portion of the booty made in successful wars. But occasionally this tacit allegiance would be repealed. There is, for example, the story of the war *kujur* of Salara, Abishet, who had refused the customary tribute to the *shirra* and had claimed that the war magic of his spirit needed

no support and no additional blessing. He led his people to war after war, never heeding the *shirra's* counsel. Bitter enmity sprang up between the two, and the *shirra* cursed Abishet that he should have no sons. The curse, it is said, came true, and finally induced the *kujur* to beg forgiveness. Then there is the case of Nimra, a war *kujur* of Tendiya. When the Government took action against the *shirra* Agemna, Nimra had a vision that the power of the *shirra* was on the wane, and would fall to him: he sided with the Government, a 'friendly' chief by inspiration if not conviction.[1]

Sometimes, too, two war *kujurs* arise in the same community, inevitably destined to become rivals and enemies. This happened in Salara, with Abishet and a man Dirdimi, the father of the present chief. Dirdimi, harbouring a spirit of more conciliatory disposition, suggested this solution—which had worked well in similar difficulties in other hills: that there should be a division of labour, and that one *kujur* should retain the leadership in war, while the other turned to fertility of the land, of women, the curing of illness, and other more peaceful concerns. Abishet—or his spirit—refused, and the hostility continued, much to the distress of the people, who were bewildered by clashing prophecies and contradictory advice. The rivalry survived into the present generation, though now emptied of its original significance.

Between the warring communities, the Chiefs of the Path (*buri eran*) travelled to and fro on their usual errands. They were either *kujurs* or of a *kujur's* family, or simply men known for their courage and honesty. An instance of the former was the ambassadorship between Salara and Ghulfan or Tendiya, which was entrusted to the oft-cited Abishet; his opposite number in Tendiya was another war *kujur*, Nimra. An instance of the latter, the ambassadorship between Salara and the hills of Wali and Kujuriya. The Nyima hills maintained Chiefs of the Path both with each other (e.g. Salara-Tendiya) and with other tribes or tribal sections (Salara-Ghulfan-Wali-Kujuriya, Kurmetti-Mendel-Dilling, Tendiya-Fanda-Karko). The ambassadors between Nyima communities were, it seems, always *kujurs*, and the sacredness of their office, their spirit-sponsored mission, already guaranteed their inviolability. With intertribal ambassadors, this inviolability was especially safeguarded by a sacrifice and blood ritual which established blood brothership (*tussol*) between the different Chiefs of the Path and their families and descendants. Thus the office became hereditary. The families of the ambassadors-elect from the two enemy groups would meet somewhere in no-man's-land and exchange the sacrificial animals (pigs). Old men from each group would kill the animals, catch the blood in a gourd, mix it with a little ochre, and smear the blood on their knees and foreheads. Afterwards the two groups would take the exchanged animals,

[1] In fact, he helped to capture Agemna by walking into the cave where the latter had been hiding, with the tremendous announcement that his, Nimra's, spirit had foretold the eclipse of the *shirra's* magic; which argument seemed to have convinced Agemna that further resistance was futile.

to eat them on their way home, some distance from their settlements. From now on they must offer each other hospitality and protect each other's lives. Should this blood pact be broken, the whole families would die.

One hill community need not have ambassadors to every enemy group, but only to a few, reaching others indirectly, in this fashion: Salara maintained a *buri eran* with Tendiya, and Tendiya with Karko; thus Salara would treat with Karko through Tendiya. Certain Nyima communities, which were linked by many clan and kinship ties, maintained no ambassadors, but treated with one another through the men of a common clan; they were as inviolable as *kujurs* or consecrated Chiefs of the Path. Such a relationship existed between Salara and Kurmetti. It was once more utilized for indirect negotiations with third groups; for Kurmetti and Salara maintained Chiefs of the Path with different communities, and Salara could reach Dilling or Mendel through Kurmetti, or Kurmetti Ghulfan and Wali through Salara.

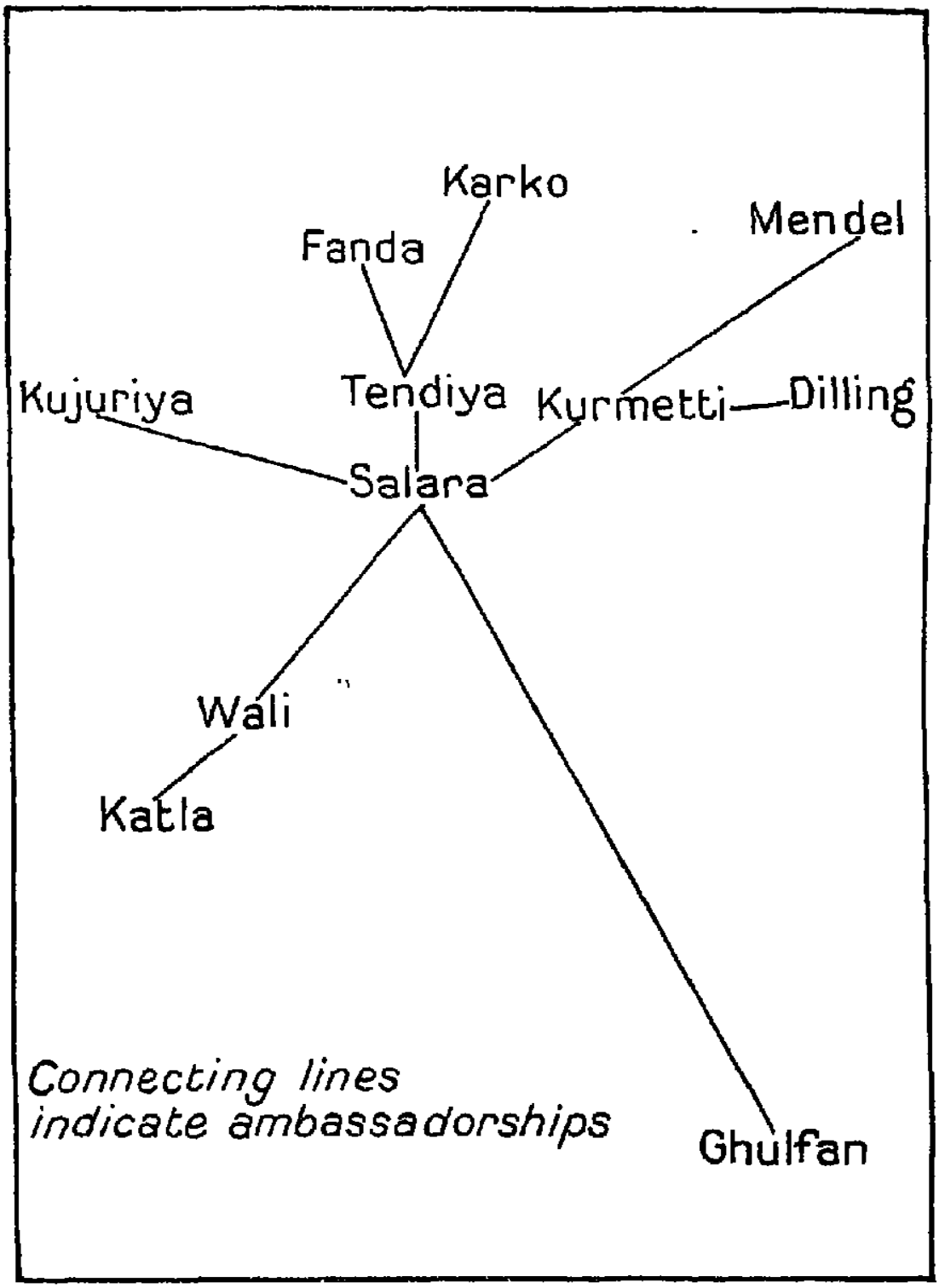
This network of intergroup relations of first and second order can to some extent be reduced to a geographical pattern. For each Nyima group maintains these ambassadorships with enemy groups which lie more or less in a direct line from it, and nearest to the fringes of Nyima territory. Where another community (Nyima or alien) lies across this line, the ambassadorship is indirect, through this third group. The following sketch map may illustrate the situation.

The *tussol* blood pact could also be extended to whole groups. It outlawed warfare and raids and established the relations of friendship and alliance between communities of which we have spoken earlier in this discussion. Such pacts existed, since many generations, between Salara and Katla, or Nyitil and Dilling. They were concluded, on the part of Nyima, by the 'hill priests', and on the part of the other group by some powerful man (as in Katla) or by the chief of the tribe (as in Dilling).[1] These pacts were initiated by the individual Nyima communities and did not need the confirmation of the *shirra*. Nor could they be concluded within the tribe, between different Nyima hills. Did, then, the conception of tribal unity forbid this additional, artificial bond? This seems indeed to have been the case. And here the ambiguous nature of tribal unity in Nyima reveals itself once again. Tribal unity was, as we have seen, too weak to support the prohibition of internal warfare by the leaders of the group, *kujurs* and *shirra*: yet it was sufficiently conscious to preclude the formal sanction and encouragement of such feuds. It equally precluded the special pacts of non-aggression, as they existed with outside groups. The two things hang together. For what

[1] The *tossul* pact differed from the blood pact in Arab fashion which the section of the *shirra* concluded with the Hawazma Arabs, and which, unlike the *tossul*, also entailed intermarriage (*see* p. 395). This latter pact is called *wuli*, 'blood'. The representatives of the two groups cut their arms and drank of each other's blood.

the leaders of the people chose to ignore—the ruptures in tribal unity —they could not, logically, annul by treaties.

Finally, kingship in Dilling. The present king, or *shil*, is the tenth in



the line of Dilling kings. With two exceptions they all belonged to the royal clan, Urshama. The exceptions reflect the influence of political and cultural changes. El Amin, the seventh king of Dilling, was of the Urotishe clan, and a sister-son of his predecessor. He had been chosen

for his personal ability and, above all, for his wide experience. For he was a widely travelled man, who knew Arab Kordofan well, which was of importance then, shortly before the Mahdist conquest. His kinship connexion through the mother also counted in his favour. The ninth King, Isa, belonged to Urtorndo. He became chief under the present Government, in this fashion. He had been acting as messenger and deputy for his predecessor, Dukuman, when the latter had grown too old to handle personally the more exacting matters of State. Thus Isa became familiar both with the affairs of government and the officers of the Administration, and Dukuman himself designated him as successor. The present chief, Gyeber, belongs again to the royal clan, being a brother-son of Dukuman.

The office of *shil* is only loosely hereditary, in the same clan but not necessarily in the same family. With the exception of the last few chiefs, the nature of the relationship between the various chiefs who succeeded each other is no longer known. After the death of a *shil* an interregnum of three years (three 'rains') ensues, during which the *genadi*, or sometimes a deputy appointed by the late chief, will rule the country. In the fourth year, during the dry season, the new king is elected by the *genadi* together with other old men of the tribe and relations of the late king. In the election, the question of 'luck' plays a decisive part: one considers carefully whether the reign of the fathers or grandfathers of the likely candidates had been prosperous and blessed. When the conclave has reached its decision, the rites of consecration, which are long and complicated, are at once begun. They are known as *shilgishibri* or *shutti* (lit. ostrich feather, after the ostrich feather which forms part of the Dilling regalia).

First, the king-elect enters a period of rigid seclusion lasting fourteen days. He spends it either in a hut in the compound of the Great *kujur* of Urtora (if there is one at the time) or in the house of the late chief. The new *shil*'s wife and first-born child undergo a similar seclusion, separately. During this period the *shil* must not see or be seen by anyone, save an old woman of his clan, who would bring him food and water. He must not leave the hut by day, and by night only for natural needs. Meat, oil, simsim, milk, and beer are forbidden to him. He must sit and sleep on a mat of palm leaves, plaited of six strips, and made by old men. Underneath it, the ground must be sprinkled daily with fresh sand. Anyone who would catch sight of the *shil* during this period would fall ill.

On the day when the *shil* enters the seclusion his family arranges a lavish feast for the women and girls born in the *shil-liri* clans, with meat, grain, and beer, sufficient to last for seven days. In the second week men from the whole tribe build a new house for the *shil*, of three huts—a sleeping-hut for the *shil*, one for his wife, and a hut for his ritual duties. The house is finished on the fifteenth day, when the *shil* and his wife are led ceremonially to their new home. A cock is killed at the gate

before they enter the compound, and a ram at the door of the ritual hut before the *shil* sets foot in it. He drinks a little of the blood and is then invested with the regalia—a small ostrich feather worn round the neck, a signet-like finger-ring of silver, and two bangles, one of wrought iron, the other of silver. The iron bangle is new, for it is thrown away after the death of each *shil*; the silver bangle and ring are handed on from generation to generation of kings.[1] Another lavish feast takes place, at which two bulls and a cow must be slaughtered and their meat distributed according to ritual rules: the cow is eaten by girls and women born in the *shil-liri* clans; the bulls by the men of *shil-liri* and *uro-niri*; the necks of the bulls and the cock are the share of the *genadi*, the ram of the sisters of the new *shil*. He himself, his wife and first-born child, as well as the *kujurs* of Urtora, do not share in this meal.[2]

For seven weeks the *shil* still observes the food *tabus*; he must not wash, nor have sexual intercourse. During daytime he stays inside the ritual hut, but in the evenings he may sit outside seeing the people and *genadi* who would come to salute him. They would, as yet, stay for a short time only. In the eighth week most of the avoidances lapse, with the exception of the sexual *tabu*. The *shil* will now see his people regularly in his house, hold council and attend to matters of State. He may now walk to his farm or visit Great *kujurs* in their houses; but he must not sit on the mats or stools of other people, and must carry his own sacred stool wherever he goes. After eleven months, the *shil* travels to the Ghadayat for the ritual hair-shaving which concludes his consecration.[3] He travels in state, with a suite composed of men from every clan. Formerly he used to take with him two slaves, a boy and a girl, as a gift to the Sultan of the Ghadayat. The latter retaliates with the following gifts: a sheepskin, an *angreb*, a bull (to be slaughtered and eaten there and then by hosts and guests together), a horse and saddle, sandals, a black coat, a sword, and, finally, the skull cap and turban which will be placed ceremonially, like a crown, on the head of the *shil*. The hair-shaving, like the crowning which it precedes, has all the features of a mystic rite: every move is made four times, and accompanied by (Arabic) blessing formulae. With this consecration rite, the king of Dilling became a vassal of the Sultan of the Ghadayat, and tributary to him.

The present king underwent this ceremony in 1937. Gifts and counter-gifts, of course, have changed. The *shil* presented £2 in money to the Sultan and his elders: 30 piastres to the old man who shaved his

[1] In the case of the present *shil*, the silver bangle, too, has been lost and had to be made new. Of the ring only the red stone is old; the ring itself was cracked and had to be repaired by the silversmiths.

[2] The animals must be taken from the *shil*'s herds; or else bought by him. The expenses of this hospitality are considerable. The present *shil* had to empty all his granaries, and to sell four cows in addition, to provide sufficient grain for beer.

[3] The hair-shaving may take place in three villages: Aloba, Abdel Baka, and Ambashar. The present *shil* travelled to the last-named place.

head; and 50 piastres to the women whose jubilations and songs accompanied the rite. He received, in turn, skull cap and turban, sheepskin, cloak, and bull, but no longer a sword and horse.

After his return to Dilling, the sexual *tabu* of the *shil* finally lapses. Certain avoidances, however, remain valid all through his life: he must never enter the village of Dilling or other settlements of the Dilling people.[1] If he has to travel to one of these settlements, he must stop outside, in a special hut. When going out to his farms, he will avoid passing close to the houses of the people. This avoidance is explained with the magic fear which all people have of his sacred bangles. In times of emergency, when there is fighting among the people and bloodshed threatening, the *shil* would utilize this very fear, and walk into the village: his appearance alone would suffice to quell the unrest. During certain times of the year, finally, these restrictions are tightened up. During the interval between the leaves-of-beans ritual and the ceremony of the *urmalke*, the *shil* must not travel far from Dilling, and during the seasonal rites themselves (each lasting four weeks), he must not leave his house, save for one official visit to the Great *kujur* of Urtora.

The political rule of the country rests in the hands of the *shil* and his council of *genadi*. The *kujurs* undertake no secular duties. Only in the last resort, at a sudden, dangerous flare-up among the people, would a Great *kujur* leave his hill and, like the *shil*, step among the crowd, clad in his gorgeous red gown of office, to strike fear into them. But he must never threaten them, lift his stick or even his arm. His magic is so strong that it would at once cause death. Indeed, this would never do: a *kujur* must always be gentle and friendly—'for is he not the father of the people?' This, then, is a final feature of the kingship of Dilling and of the separation of sacred and temporal powers. While the former are conceived of as gentle and paternal, the latter must include sanctions and the use of force. The office of the priests fulfils itself in guidance; of the chief, in coercion.

The Tribal Code

To the varying strength of chieftainship in the three groups corresponds the varying balance between centralized judicial authority and the claims of self-help. In all three tribes, however, certain offences against the tribal code remain outside the domain of legal action. A first group are religious offences: disregard of ritual rules like seasonal avoidances and food *tabus*, and actions tantamount to desecration. In Koalib the local grain priest (*krdal*) will impose the fine of a goat or pig upon a man who cut and ate certain crops before the first-fruit rite. Adultery, rape, or bloodshed on cultivated land are regarded as religious offences apart from being crimes, desecrating the land and endangering fertility. Again, the

[1] The modern Dilling town, and the walk to the market or the District Office, fall now outside the '*tabu* area'.

grain priest would levy the fine of an animal, which he must sacrifice in a rite of purification.

In Dilling, it falls to the *genadi* to punish offenders against the seasonal avoidances of the tribe, which are severe and numerous; they entail many food *tabus* and also forbid the cutting of the fresh bark of the *tibeldi* tree for rope-making, the collection of firewood on cultivated land, and all singing, shouting, and quarrelling (even between husband and wife) during the 'close season'.[1] The *genadi* would summon and fine the culprit or, if he refused to appear before them, shoulder their sticks of office, march to his house, and sit down in front of it until he came out and begged forgiveness. If he still remained recalcitrant, they would knock their sticks against the ground and leave him to his fate: he would fall ill, and would have to pay an even heavier fine to buy off the curse.

The Nyima equally consider quarrel and fights on cultivated land an evil thing, though no sanctions are admitted. In all three tribes crimes against *kujurs* (theft, adultery) stand in a category by themselves. They invite supernatural punishment, and can be made good only by ritual offerings and acts of expiation.

A second group of offences outside the orbit of secular law are clan and kinship crimes: infringements of the laws of exogamy and incest, and homicide in the clan. Dilling law recognized no difference between homicide in the clan and between clans; all bloodshed is regarded essentially as a religious crime, as an evil and not merely lawless act, entailing expiation rather than punishment. This extension of the concept of sin reflects the nature of this tribal unity, which, to the people, is unalterable and pre-ordained, like creation itself.

The traditional legal machinery in Koalib was in the hands of the chief, who held court together with the family heads of the community. The brother *kujur* of the chief did not take part in these proceedings; he was called in only when ordeals or oaths were to be administered. Traditional law in Nyima was entirely one of 'self-help' of individuals or groups. 'Procedure' was reduced to the informal consultations of old men, to whom it would fall to compose feuds and achieve final reconciliation. Court procedure in Dilling was more elaborate and laid down in greater detail. The court was composed of the *shil* and the *genadi*. In difficult cases, old men would be called in who could give the court the benefit of their experience. The plaintiff either approached the *shil* directly (especially in serious cases) or called first on the *gindi* or some old man in his locality, who would then report the case to the *shil*. Private quarrels or fights could be heard by the *gindi*, or the *gindi* and some old men; these small courts could levy fines up to one goat, but

[1] The rational motive behind certain of these avoidances is clearly that of preventing damage to the young crops. Recently the Dilling people were bitterly complaining that Arab women were collecting firewood on their cultivations during the close season, trampling down the shoots. They felt this lawlessness twice as badly, since, to them, it was a religious offence as well.

their decisions always needed the approval of the *shil*. Or the *shil* might delegate such unimportant cases to a *gindi*, as he would also allocate all fines up to one goat to the *genadi*; bigger fines were his property. The animal which a *gindi* received in payment of a fine would be eaten by all the *genadi* of Dilling in a communal meal. Property and matrimonial disputes could never be heard by the *genadi* alone.

We turn, then, to the code of law of the three tribes.

Matrimonial Offences. In Koalib and Nyima cases of seduction and adultery were mostly settled by self-help—that is, fights between the rivals—as already described. In Koalib such disputes were also taken to the chief, but often only after the rivals had first satisfied their manhood in a duel with sticks. The chief, when settling the case, would make the men swear on the *kujur* to respect his (the chief's) decision and to desist from further retaliation. The woman is never asked to take a similar oath. Only in one of the cases which I recorded was the arbitration by the chief followed by a renewal of hostility; it was also the only case remembered in which the fight over a woman had a fatal end. It happened in 1925 or 1926. A certain Makay had committed adultery with the wife of a neighbour, Bulla, and the latter took the case to court. The chief ordered Makay to swear not to commit adultery again, but Bulla himself asked that this oath should be remitted; for he felt certain that Makay, an inveterate adulterer apparently, would break the oath, and Bulla did not want to be responsible for 'the death of a brother'. So the chief merely exacted a promise from the other man to leave Bulla's wife alone. Bulla paid dear for his soft heart: Makay went about boasting that Bulla was afraid of him, and that he (Makay) could do what he liked with Bulla's wife. When Bulla learned of this, rage possessed him; he ran to Makay's house and stabbed him dead. Immediately afterwards he gave himself up to the police.

In Dilling adultery and seduction must be brought before the chief and the *genadi*, who would fine the culprit. I have already described the fines. Let me add that they are increased if the offence is repeated; an incorrigible adulterer would even be tied up for a day or two in the *shil*'s house as a warning. In the past duels between husbands and paramours frequently happened, and the right of a husband to beat up the interloper was tacitly admitted. If such self-help was officially discouraged, it was mainly from fear that serious injuries or even death might be the result, and a comparatively minor offence turned into the gravest crime.

Property Offences. The owner of stolen property (mostly livestock) in Koalib would never attempt to take the law into his own hands, but would appeal to the chief for help. The chief would then order the thief to return the animals or, if the thief refused, would recover them by force, assisted by the whole community. The comments of the people show how firmly anchored was the conception of a centralized political authority. There could be no thought, on the part of the group, of failing to support the chief's action. Nor did the action of the chief

need any additional (for example, supernatural) sanction beyond that flowing from the established, accepted authority. I asked my informants: 'You say that the whole community would support the chief; but were there not perhaps some who took the part of the thief, say, his clan or family?' They replied: 'Never; they would never act against the will of the *kweleny*.' I: 'But why?' Informants: 'Because they knew that he was the *kweleny*, and his father and grandfather before him had been *kweleny*.' When the stolen property had been recovered, the thief was made to swear not to steal again; he would not, however, be fined. The owner of the property had to offer the chief one goat (if more than one had been stolen) for his mediation. These rules apply only to theft between different kinship groups; theft committed within the kinship group is not subject to legal action proper, the culprit being handed over to his own family head for redress and punishment.

In Nyima theft was left entirely to self-help, as we have described it for other tribes. Dilling dealt with theft much as did Koalib, but the thief would be fined one goat or one bull, and a recalcitrant culprit would, in addition, be put in prison in the chief's house, tied to a forked post like a captured slave. By this measure his relations might be induced to return the stolen property if he himself refused; but (unlike the law of Koalib) Dilling law did not otherwise permit holding the family of a thief responsible for the loss which he had caused. This limited liability is maintained in modern jurisdiction.

Homicide. The rules governing homicide in the clan and between different clans reflect closely the varying social structure of the three tribes. Thus Koalib law introduces the new distinction between homicide within and without the extended family ('house'); Nyima law distinguishes homicide in the individual family and in the same sub-clan from homicide between different sub-clans of the same clan; in Dilling, as we have heard, clan and tribe are regarded as equivalent groups.

Homicide in the same 'house' in Koalib is not punishable by secular law. The culprit must not eat or drink with any member of his clan in his locality, nor with any member of his own extended family anywhere, even if sections of the family have emigrated to distant places. The sanction is leprosy. In practice, this prohibition will force him to emigrate to another community where none of his relatives is living and where he could thus escape the life of an outcast. I recorded a case of this kind which happened many years ago: the culprit emigrated to some distant country, no one knew where.

A man who kills a fellow clansman, of a different 'house', is still not subject to secular law. The ostracism under which he will be forced to live is only little less severe: he must not eat or drink (lest he be afflicted with leprosy) with any clansman of the same locality, nor any member of the family of the victim regardless of locality. Again emigration, though not necessarily very far, will be the result.

Homicide between different clans involves the payment of blood

money (*urura*) to the victim's family; it is enforced by the chief, and amounts to four cows and one bull, irrespective of age and sex of the victim. Revenge is forbidden. The exchange of blood money does not obviate the ritual avoidances which also apply in this case of homicide; they imply the prohibition to eat or drink with the family members of the victim anywhere, and with his (or her) clans fellows in the same locality.

It goes without saying that these eating avoidances must entail corresponding prohibitions of intermarriage. They are accompanied by another prohibition—namely, of accepting oil for anointing the body (as young men often do, from their girl friends) from any relative of the victim. They thus preclude even the preliminaries of courtship. Again, leprosy is the penalty. Now, all these avoidances and prohibitions apply, not only to the culprit himself, but equally to all his 'fathers', 'brothers', and 'sons' (in the classificatory sense), and through the following generations. Young men and women must thus be warned by their elders that they must not eat or become friends with this or that family, because of some killing that happened long ago. This sweeping prohibition was never quite easy to observe. But it has become more and more difficult now, since frequent migrations have made it almost impossible to keep track of the movements of families and clans. Moreover, young men now wander about a great deal, go to dances and feasts in distant places (of whose population they know nothing), and court girls who might easily happen to belong to one of the '*tabu*' families. Indeed, the people are convinced that leprosy has greatly increased owing to these facts, and the unearthing of the causes, with which human memory can no longer grapple, represents another task for the divinatory powers of the spirit priests.[1]

The Nyima, like the Koalib, admit the occurrence of homicide in the family, even between biological relations. A case of fratricide is remembered which happened in 1916. It is not, however, treated specially, but falls in the same category as homicide in the sub-clan. It calls for expiation in a ritual called *kunyuru turmudu*, which must be performed immediately after the funeral. The whole kinship group would meet together, eat of the fermented grain of which beer is made, and the culprit would be made to walk round the grave of his victim. Until then he was forbidden to stay in the house of his family or eat with his relatives and clansmen, lest he died, or be killed, within the year. The graveness of the crime, however, is such that it is by no means certain that this ritual will help; in the case just mentioned it is said to have proved of no avail.

If the homicide occurs between different sub-clans of the same clan, a new distinction is observed—namely, between a homicide which causes

[1] The Koalib are greatly afraid of leprosy. They believe that it is infectious, though only in the same extended family, and can be contracted if the relatives of a leper eat and drink with him, or her, from the same vessel. They make lepers live in separate huts and eat alone, though they do not exclude them from family feasts or rituals.

the relatives of the victim to 'be angry', and one in which they will be ready to forget and forgive. This distinction coincides largely with that between intentional and accidental killing. In the latter case the *kunyuru* rite just described will be performed, this time with more promise of success. In the former, the rules are the same as in homicide between different clans.

Here the simple expiation of the *kunyuru* ritual is forbidden. The desire for revenge is accepted as the legitimate response—not a standardized revenge of the exact retaliation type, but one dominated by the emotional urge rather than the conception of some *quid pro quo*. As soon as the news of the crime transpired, the offender and his family would flee from the village, knowing that the whole clan of the victim would come down upon them to burn their houses. A weak group would remain in hiding; a strong family might return to protect their property, and then a battle would ensue, fought with spears and guns, which might not end until there had been more victims, and other clans would rush in to stop the fight. The victims in this battle would not cause new blood feud and revenge, but the men responsible for their death would share the fate of every murderer—self-exile and ostracism.

The family group of a murderer which would seek safety in flight comprises his father, mother, children, brothers, father-brothers, and paternal grandfather. They would only flee to a neighbouring community and would not remain long in exile: either till after the battle or, if there was no battle, till after the final funeral rite. They thus remove themselves from the scene while the grief and thirst for revenge are most violent. An influential old man, mostly the local *kujur*, would undertake to recall the fugitives and let them meet, in his house, the family of the victim. He advises the two to bury their feud, but warns the family of the culprit to abandon the culprit himself to his fate, not to eat or drink with him, nor even to try to see him, lest they would be made to share his exile. After this reconciliation, the two families may eat and drink together without fear (only the families, not the whole clans, fall under this *tabu*); no further ritual is necessary so far as they themselves are concerned.

If the killing caused deep anger, the brothers of the culprit sometimes hide longer in the hills than the rest of the family, till the excitement has died down. The culprit himself must stay in exile for four years or more. He flees far away, always to another tribe, taking all his possessions with him. He would leave immediately after he committed the deed, for he is not allowed to eat or drink with anyone, least of all with his own family, while still on Nyima territory. If he broke this *tabu*, he would die—of leprosy or a dropsical disease. When the four years have lapsed, the brothers of the murderer will suggest the performance of the final purification rite which is to terminate the exile. It is called *wulikre* (from *wuli*, 'blood'). When or whether it takes place, however, depends on the relatives of the victim; it did happen that they constantly refused, and the homicide died in exile.

This is the *wulikre* rite. The brothers of victim and culprit, accompanied by two old women (mothers and father-sisters) and an old man from a third, 'neutral' clan, meet at a place outside the village, where they sit down a short distance from each other. The old man kills a ram (produced by the family of the homicide) in the empty space between the two groups. The two groups change places, walking past the animal. Then two men, one from each group, meet in the middle to roast the animal over a fire. The meat is divided in two equal parts, which are placed in front of the two groups. The old women on each side now take a little of the meat belonging to the opposite group and also some simsim oil which had been placed in a gourd in the middle of the empty space, and return home. There they smear the oil over the bedsteads of the victim and homicide respectively, and eat the meat. The rest of the meat is eaten by the two groups of brothers, each helping itself from the other group's portion. Afterwards the culprit is allowed to return from his exile, and need no longer fear revenge. But throughout his life he will be forbidden to eat or drink in the house and with the parents or brothers of his victim.

Again the greater or lesser intensity of the 'anger' felt by the victim's family may modify the rules. For if the killing occurred under conditions which warrant leniency, his relations would not force that battle of revenge, nor insist on a long exile of the offender; mostly they would agree to perform the *wulikre* already after one year. But there is no rigid rule: emotions and sentiments alone decide.

In Dilling, the homicide and certain of his relations would at once flee into exile, to another tribe. This is true of every kind of killing (the Dilling people deny that homicide in the family ever happened). They flee, not because of fear of revenge, but because leprosy would befall them if they stayed on in the place of the crime. Revenge is never contemplated by the victim's family, nor would the tribe admit it as a justifiable act; rather would it represent a separate, new crime. The family group which exiles itself with a homicide comprises, rather surprisingly, his maternal relations: full brothers, mother, mother-brothers, and mother-sisters with their sons. They take all their movable possessions with them, livestock, grain from the granaries, and also food for the journey; but they must not begin to eat till they have reached uninhabited country. During their whole exile they must not eat or drink with any person from Dilling. For their exile they will choose a tribe where they have friends, lest they be killed as unwelcome strangers, and where economic conditions are promising; for they will have to find there a temporary living.

The culprit himself, immediately after he committed his crime, will seek temporary sanctuary with the Urtora *kujur*. For he must remain in Dilling for some time yet—till the body has been buried, and till a friend of his has brought him, in the dark of night, a handful of earth from the grave. True, the culprit need not fear revenge: but if he were

seen in the village, people would throw stones at him, and if he went near the grave, the relations of the victim might even kill him. Carrying the earth from the grave in a gourd, the murderer now leaves Dilling, by night, for his exile. The *kujur* of Urtora will take him beyond the Dilling hills and there, on the tribal boundary, dismiss him with a blessing: 'God give you health. May the thorns not prick you.' The fugitive may not eat or drink till he has reached his destination. He will first shave his hair and eyebrows, and then throw the earth from the grave into his first drink of water. Unlike his relations, he is not allowed to take any but his personal possessions with him: his grain and livestock are confiscated by the chief. Now he must find himself a new spear, with a straight, clean shaft, which he will carry wherever he goes. He must not let it out of reach even when asleep; nor must he ever take off his arm-knife. When eating or drinking, or simply sitting with other people, he plants the spear in front of him so that everyone may know that he is a murderer, and unclean.

The paternal relations of the culprit, his wife and children, stand under a much lighter *tabu*, which does not force them to emigrate. They are only forbidden to eat with the family of the victim. The exiles and the relations who stay behind communicate mostly through travellers who carry their messages; occasionally one of the fugitives would pay a secret visit to Dilling, reaching there by night, and refusing all food till he has again crossed the tribal boundary.

After a number of years—at least two, but often four or five—the fugitives will send word that they desire to return, asking their relatives to start the necessary negotiations. Eventually they all return with their cattle and other possessions, stopping outside Dilling, on the far side of the hills. The *genadi* and the Urtora *kujur*, informed of their coming, go out to them and inquire when they would hand over the blood money. On the appointed day the cattle representing the blood money are driven into the compound of the king. One cow belongs to the Urtora *kujur*—that is, the Urtora spirit—the rest (fifteen cows) to the king. On the next day the families of homicide and victim meet in the chief's house. They sit round in a circle; some beer, simsim oil, and a little food 'that is planted' (i.e. grain, simsim, cucumbers), had been prepared. Then the biggest bull of the blood money cattle is killed by a *gindi*: he plunges a piece of wood into the blood of the animal and holds it out to the chief. The latter touches it with the little finger of his left hand, which he licks afterwards. One after another, the oldest woman of the victim's, and the oldest woman of the culprit's family, and then all the other women, do the same. A little of the blood is mixed with the beer, together with a medicinal root which is believed to prevent leprosy. The women of both groups first, later the men, taste of the beer, and then take some of the residue of grain, left over after the beer has been filtered, and smear it on their navels. The mother of the victim rubs simsim oil on the neck of the other man's mother, who retaliates in equal fashion.

At the same time a fire has been lighted in the centre of the circle, and the grain, simsim, and other foodstuff which had been prepared is thrown into it. It has this meaning: the smoke should drift round, over both groups, and cleanse them, so that they should no longer be afraid to eat together. A common meal, of the bull's meat, concludes the rite, and with it the blood feud. The culprit himself has a final duty to fulfil. The same night he walks up to the Urtora *kujur*'s house, and ties a calf to the post of the *kujur's* grass shed and leaves a lambskin on his stool. Having made these offerings to the spirit, he too is freed of all *tabus*.

I have called the payment of cattle 'blood money', since this is the literal translation of the vernacular term—*onur kuje*, 'exchange (for) blood'. Legally, it represents a fine rather than blood money, for it goes entirely to the chief, the victim's family receiving no share. In fact, they would still be afraid of leprosy if they were to own and eat this property of their blood enemies.

Bloodshed which does not lead to killing entails neither the blood ritual nor any avoidances and *tabus*. The culprit is fined in accordance with the seriousness of the injury: a basketful of grain or one to two goats for light injuries, two or more goats, or a bull, if the injury is severe (e.g. the knocking out of teeth or the fracture of an arm or leg). The payment represents, again, a fine, no compensation to the victim being allowed. In Koalib and Nyima no special rules seem to exist which govern the infliction of injuries.[1] The Nyima lay down special rules with regard to injuries which end fatally: if the victim of the attack appears to have recovered and has already gone about his daily tasks, his subsequent death is declared to be due to natural causes; or if he remained alive, though ailing, for over two months after the assault, one assumes that he died from an illness other than that caused by the injury.

Neither Koalib nor Dilling recognize any distinction between intentional and accidental killing. In Nyima, as we have seen, this distinction is implied, indirectly, in the emotional response to the crime.

Oaths and Ordeals. They centre round the person of the *kujur*, and we need only outline the different techniques which are used in the three tribes. The general practice in Koalib is to take the oath on the large bead which the *bayel* priests wear round the neck. Some *kujurs* possess special instruments of ordeal: the chief's *kujur* in Delami, for example, owns a copper bowl, which one of his ancestors has brought from El Obeid. This bowl is filled with the fat of a sheep killed at the *utini* ritual, the most important of the seasonal rites of the tribe. The fat is smeared over the face of the accused who protests his innocence; it will cause his death if he had not spoken the truth. If a case is brought before the rain-maker, the accused will again be made to swear on the large bead which forms part of the paraphernalia of the rain-maker as

[1] My data on this point are not, however, very complete.

well as of *kujurs*: the sanction, however, is not simple death, but death through lightning.[1]

In Nyima, the suspect would swear to his innocence on an iron object—a spear or knife—belonging to a *kujur*. If he perjured himself he would fall ill and die within a short time. He can, however, escape this deadly effect if he can make good his crime, e.g. by returning the stolen property, and in addition offering one goat to the spirit. He appears in the *kujur*'s house at dawn, before he had touched food (before he 'chewed anything'), even before he cleaned his teeth. The *kujur* spits at him, which removes the curse. The *kujur* returns the stolen property to the owner, from whom he receives another gift of one goat.

In Dilling oaths are taken either on the bangles of the king or on the spear of a man (any man) of the Urkellan clan. In the former case perjury is said to cause a fatal disease which, from descriptions, seems to be sleeping sickness; in the latter, the perjurer would be killed by a spear, in a fight, or by accident.[2] If a man is killed by lightning, people will say that he was a thief, and that this was his punishment. It may have been caused by the owner of the stolen property appealing to a spirit to punish the unknown culprit; but it may also represent a spontaneous action of the clan spirit Urmande, which has the lightning in its power.

Magic and Witchcraft. In all three tribes we discover vague beliefs in certain deadly magic, like the evil eye or powers of witchcraft, which individuals might possess—individuals, that is, who are neither *kujurs* nor in any other way linked with the spirit cult. The Nyima speak of them as *koro*, the Dilling people as *abolesha*; the Koalib beliefs correspond closely to those of Heiban. These powers are of little importance, however, and largely overshadowed by the magic of spirit and spirit priest. They are also discovered and can be countered with the help of spirits and *kujurs*. The difference between the two species of supernatural power is essentially of a moral order: the witchcraft-like evil magic works with the directness of a mechanical device; the spirit power, though equally deadly, is effective only when used in sanction of some wrong.

Since spirit magic reflects and serves the cause of justice one cannot, logically, appeal against the actions (or supposed actions) of *kujurs* before a court of law. One can only enlist the help and countermagic of other *kujurs*. True, these duels of *kujurs*—fought in the realm of imaginary happenings—are apt to obscure the rights and wrongs of the dispute. Take the case of a man who falls ill and suspects a magic cause; he consults a *kujur*, who will diagnose the agency of another *kujur* spirit,

[1] A Government report states that in 1939 a *kujur* in Koalib introduced a new magic of ordeal nature, claiming that he could discover the traces of stolen property in the hands of suspects. The report is not very precise, and does not make it quite clear whether the *kujur* in question was a Koalib man. However, it lies in the nature of the *kujur* cult that new types of ordeals should appear.

[2] People sometimes swear, in conversation, by the stool of *kujurs*. They might exclaim: 'By the *koton urtu* (stool of the spirit), what I say is true.' But such an oath has no binding power, nor does it carry any sanctions.

summoned by someone whom his client had once wronged. Whereupon the latter will bribe 'his' *kujur* to save him from the avenging magic: this may or may not work—and whether the failure is due to the prevailing of right, or merely to the lesser powers of the protecting *kujur*, will always remain an open question. Yet withal it is true to say that the belief in spirits and their magic expresses, in essence, the dogma of what I have called 'a moral universe'.

Inter-group Relations. The preceding discussion dealt with tribal law only in so far as it concerned the political unit—that is, the hill community in Koalib and Nyima, and the tribe in Dilling. Outside the political unit we find both the 'lawlessness' which characterizes the relations of enemy groups and the extension of group law over 'intermediate zones' governed by pacts and treaties. This 'international' law is concerned mainly with the crime which represents *par excellence* an attack on the integrity of groups—the taking of human life. In Koalib, for example, adultery or seduction between different communities would lead to fights and collective self-help; but homicide between the same groups might have to be submitted to peaceful arbitration.

I will describe the 'international' law which obtained in Koalib from the viewpoint of the hill community of Delami. Delami had pacts with Dere, Nyukur, Kimli, Ndona, and Kortala. They forbade revenge and entailed the exchange of the usual blood money. With other Koalib communities, as well as Arabs and the people of Laro, Delami recognized only revenge—whether the chance revenge of war or the exact retaliation entailed in blood feuds is impossible to say.[1]

In Nyima the sacred *tussol* pacts between communities prevented effectively (it is said) homicide between these groups. A breach of this pact of blood brothership would be left to supernatural punishment. The relations of the culprit would merely send a gift of honey and one goat to the family of the victim, as an offering for the sacrifice of expiation. Apart from these pacts, the institution of the Chiefs of the Path represented the only attempt at modifying the 'lawlessness' of intergroup relations.

Dilling had similar pacts of blood brothership with some of her neighbours—Kudur, Sabey, Kaduru, and the hill communities Nyitil and Kurmetti of Nyima. The taking of human life between these groups was regarded as a grave crime, a sin almost, which called for immediate purification, but for no secular punishment or arbitration. The culprit would hurry home, without touching food or drink, and present himself to the *genadi* of the *shil-liri* clans. He would sit down in their ritual grass hut,

[1] My informants maintained that the revenge was always in the nature of blood feuds. If this were true it would constitute another 'intermediate zone', nearer to, yet still distinguished from, unrestricted warfare. It is difficult to believe that this could have been the case, although individual families might possibly seek retaliation and exact revenge. The revenge was certainly not backed by any sanctions or public pressure. The accounts of Arab raids, moreover, reveal the irregular character of this state of war.

his gun or spear across his knees, and wait for the *genadi* and other old men to assemble. They would take him to the *shil*'s house and make him sit on a near-by antheap. An old man, who had once himself committed the same crime, would cut the culprit's hair on both sides of the head, leaving it uncut in the middle. Afterwards the culprit would be taken to his home, where he would have his first drink of water. Here, too, the rest of his head would be shaved, which act concludes the rite of purification.

To have spoken, as we did, of an 'extension' of group law over other, outside communities is, then, only partly correct. It is true of Koalib; but in Nyima and Dilling the pacts between groups imply a code fundamentally different from that governing the single society. The law of homicide valid within the single society contains elements both of secular sanctions and compensation, and of spiritual expiation: the law of homicide obtaining between allied groups, only the latter. One code of law, then, reflects rational regulations of social control; the other a mystic bond. We may add that these alliances are neither geographically nor culturally uniform: they link neighbouring hills (Dilling-Kudur, Dilling-Nyitil) as well as distant communities (Dilling-Dabatua, Salara-Katla), communities which share language and culture (Dilling-Kudur), and alien groups (Dilling-Nyitil). I cannot explain this fully. But we can see where the explanation must lie—in the specific nature of the group identity of Nyima and Dilling which, strongly conscious, forbids that their internal social order should be duplicated or even fashioned similarly in the relations between the groups. Implicitly, it excludes the idea of political growth or expansion. And in this sense it becomes important: for it bears on the attempts of the modern administration to federate, and merge into larger units, the traditional political systems.

Modern Law and Administration

We have already outlined the modern political organization in Koalib: it rests on the chiefs of hill communities (*Meks*), each assisted by sub-chiefs (*Sheikhs*), and envisages a tribal federation under the paramount chief of Dere.[1]

In Dilling the traditional chieftainship has been fully embodied into the modern system of Government. The *genadi*, the erstwhile assistants of the *shil*, have disappeared from the political field—as individuals. But the social principle which they represent, the clan structure, of which their offices are an expression in the spiritual sphere, still dominates the political organization. The modern Native Administration which the Dilling people have evolved flows directly from the old clan system and its principle of representation. Unlike other tribes, Dilling did not elect its sub-chiefs or elders on a territorial basis. The sub-chiefs (*Sheikhs*)

[1] This federation had not yet materialized at the time of my visit, and there was no paramount chief as yet (*see* p. 452). Delami rather than Dere was the centre of gravity of tribal organization, and will, in my view, remain so. The qualifications of having a police post, a dispensary, and a large market count more nowadays than the proximity of the rain-maker's shrine.

and elders (*agawid*), recruited irregularly from different localities, are organized in precisely the same manner as the *genadi*. We find three parallel groups, *genadi*, *Sheikhs* and *agawid*, each composed of an equal number of representatives of the various spirit-ruled clans, as is shown in the following diagram:

Clans	*Genadi*	*Sheikhs*	*Agawid*
Urtora	6	6	6
Urshuli	1	1	1
Urotishi	1	1	1
Urkellan	1	1	1
Urshaman	1	1	1
Urshumat	1	1	1
Urtorndo	1	1	1
Urmande	1	1	—
Urshiru		—	1
Urwartene	—	—	—

The correspondence in the organization of the three groups even extends to the representation of the two brother clans Urmande-Urshiru by one individual and to the omission of the clan associated with the dangerous, savage spirit Urwartene. This exactness is no doubt largely an expression of the schematic trend which is so conspicuous in Dilling culture. But it expresses also a careful, well-balanced adaptation of the traditional social system for the purposes of modern government. The old principle of clan responsibility has been retained; but its two aspects, spiritual and secular responsibility, are now sharply divided. The people fully recognize—and will tell you in so many words—that administration has become (in a phrase used previously) a task *sui generis*; it can no longer be entrusted to men whose main qualification is hereditary succession and the inherited knowledge of ritual rules and secrets. Sub-chiefs and elders meet regularly in the chief's house to discuss the affairs of the community and dispense justice. There has been some hesitation as to where to hold these meetings. The relative attractions of a place hallowed by tradition, the chief's house, and one symbolic of modern authority, the District Office, are still, it seems, difficult to balance.

In Nyima, the changes from traditional to modern political system are most pronounced. The *shirra* and his office of paramount leadership have found no place in the modern administrative system. This is based on a council of *Meks* and *Sheikhs*, the former ruling over hill communities,[1] the latter representing individual settlements in the hill community. The old principle of spirit-inspired leadership is still visible in the selection of the chiefs. Both among *Meks* and *Sheikhs* we find a large proportion of shamans: four of the five *Meks* are incarnations of spirits,

[1] Two small hill communities have been absorbed in larger ones—Kallara in Tendiya, and Kakara in Fossu. The 'half-hill' Shirowa now belongs to Salara.

and of important, ancient spirits, like those concerned with war or the guardianship of hills; two are fully fledged *kujurs* (in Fossu and Nyitil). Three of the six *Sheikhs* of Salara and two of the seven *Sheikhs* of Tendiya possess *kuni* spirits. But in the selection of their chiefs the people have also done justice to the basic feature of Nyima social structure, the clan system. Apart from being local heads, the chiefs and sub-chiefs are also clan representatives. Every bigger clan is represented roughly in proportion to its strength in the particular community. That this element of organization was utilized consciously is revealed in the appointment of minor tribal functionaries, the local tax-collectors. Each Nyima community has a number of tax-collectors, called 'heads' or *rais* (Arabic) and their selection again reflects the clan distribution. In fact, I was told that the people would object to paying tax to collectors other than their own clan fellows. The proportion of the number of tax-collectors to the size of the clans or clan sections is not closely standardized; where the latter are widely scattered, more tax-collectors are apt to be employed than seems warranted by the size of the group. This scheme of clan representation is shown in the following chart, which gives the population figures and the lists of chiefs and tax-collectors for two hill communities, Salara and Tendiya. (The population figures refer to the number of taxpayers; the double names under the heading 'clan' indicate sub-clans.)

Clan	*Population*	*Chiefs*	*Tax-collectors*
	Salara		
Baya-Sabyaŋ	220	*Mek, Sheikh*	7
Kurmede	294	2 *Sheikhs*	7
Baya-Inaŋ	187	*Sheikh*	7
Togi	150	*Sheikh*	4
Gujer	43	—	1
Baya-Mawru	34	—	1
Others	21	—	1
	Tendiya		
Aneman	182	*Mek, Sheikh*	8
Kuder	494	4 *Sheikhs*	8
Fuy	250	*Sheikh*	5
Fawara	143	*Sheikh*	6
Modu	72	—	2
Gyo	44	—	2
Oroma	30	—	1

The sub-chiefs, often together with old men of their group, hold their small, informal courts under a tree somewhere in their locality. All sub-chiefs meet in or near the *Mek's* house for the regular meetings of the hill court. Finally, there is the tribal court, attended by all chiefs and sub-chiefs, which hears the more serious cases, cases involving more than one community, or cases of appeal. The present chairman of this

court, and thus the president of the Nyima tribal federation, is the chief of Salara. Administrative measures, Government orders, reach the population through this hierarchy of chiefs.

Territorial chieftainship, though in itself a new principle in this tribe, has emerged from the remarkably happy fusion of traditional structural features—local units and clan organization. The favourable constellation of Nyima grouping, with its tendency towards a territorial concentration of clans, has no doubt greatly helped towards a smooth development. Nor is the traditional principle of leadership by inspired individuals disregarded. But the latter must always remain a weakness rather than a source of strength, whether embodied in the political structure or left outside. Outside, it may create rival leaders; or its dynamic visionary spirit may strain from within against the political framework.[1]

The traditional law as well as sanctions of conduct not originally within the domain of secular jurisdiction have passed into the hands of the modern tribal government. Already a firm court procedure and court etiquette have evolved. Visualize a court session in Nyima or Dilling: chiefs and elders sit round the walls of the court-house, the presiding chiefs on chairs, the rest on *angrebs* or on mats on the floor. Litigants and witnesses are made to wait outside till they are summoned into the presence of the court. They are led in by tribal police, having left their weapons, sticks, and sandals at the door. In Nyima, too, they must stand at a respectful distance from the chiefs. The discussion is calm and dignified; a litigant who would raise his voice would at once be reprimanded. The lesser chiefs and elders give their verdict first, the presiding chiefs speak last. They finally announce the judgement, accompanying it with a short address in which they impress upon the litigants the grounds for the decision or the graveness of the offence. They recall impressively the tenets of tribal morality, and often insist on a formal admission of guilt. It takes much less time to discover and establish the guilt than to assess it in terms of a concrete sentence: fines and prison sentences are repeatedly modified in the course of the discussions of the court. Take the following case against five lads of Dilling who ambushed and beat up another fellow for flirting with the girl of one of them. The first sentence suggested was five months in prison for the ringleader and two months each for the others; a second suggestion was six months for the ringleader, three months each for two others who played a prominent part in the assault, two months for a third, who took part in the ambush, but not in the beating up, and acquittal for the

[1] This does not necessarily mean an open conflict between the dictates of vision and the official duties of the *kujur* chief. But his spiritual powers may prove a supernatural sanction out-reaching the political office. I have spoken of the new, supreme spirit which appeared in the chief of Salara. This chief is only a president of the council of tribal chiefs. But he has shown in many ways that he aspires to the more absolute powers of a paramount chief proper. The most convincing qualification would clearly be the possession of a 'paramount' spirit. Needless to say, a neurotic subject will easily produce (with the best conscience) the symptoms which are to serve his—conscious or subconscious—desire.

last; a number of court members suggested six months for the ringleader and three months each for the rest; finally, this sentence was agreed on: five months in prison for the three main culprits, and three months and one month respectively for the remaining two accused.

The concern over the dignity of the court has led to the inclusion of a new delict in the list of punishable offences, contempt of court. After a divorce case in Dilling the two litigants, ex-husband and paramour, started to insult each other as soon as they left the court-house. The paramour jeered at the husband: 'If it were not for the *Hakuma*, you would never have got the money out of me [i.e. the bride-price refund]; you would have tasted my spear instead.' The husband retorted: 'You ass. *Hakuma* or no *Hakuma*, do you think you could have killed me just like that?' This exchange of compliments was at once reported to the court, and the two men were hauled in again, to be fined 20 and 15 piastres respectively. The fines first suggested by the court were much heavier—£1 and 50 piastres, £1 and 75 piastres, 80 piastres and 70 piastres.[1]

We turn to the metamorphosis of traditional law under modern conditions. Religious offences still largely retain their specific, independent position. The grain priests of Koalib and the *genadi* of Dilling still punish offenders against ritual rules as they have done of old. The *genadi* watch jealously over their prerogative to enforce strict observation of the seasonal *tabus*, even in the Arab shops of Dilling town. Indeed, they boast that they have the full backing of the District Office to confiscate all first-fruits or other objects which are *tabu* (e.g. new ropes of *tibeldi* fibre) if they were offered for sale during the close season.[2] On the other hand, a purely religious conflict, such as the dispute mentioned in the last chapter, over the performance of the 'bull ceremony' in Nyitil, was submitted to the jurisdiction of the chief (though it must be admitted that the chief's verdict failed to produce its effect). And a Dilling *kujur* preferred the legal procedure against the paramour of his bride to the supernatural intervention which is guaranteed to the servants of spirits.

As regards kinship crimes (incestuous offences or breaches of exogamous rules), my data refer to Nyima only. Here these delicts are now submitted to secular justice, like ordinary cases of adultery or seduction, and entail the same punishment as the most severe variety of these crimes (six months in prison).

I have already described the modern legal treatment of matrimonial

[1] The general view was that the man who started the quarrel should be fined more heavily. One old chief held the opposite view, arguing as follows: the first remark should not be taken seriously, for to blame the *Hakuma* was a very common thing when people were angry; it was the retort which turned an in itself harmless remark into a real quarrel. This old man had evidently not yet grasped the principle of 'contempt of court', which was so obvious to his colleagues on the bench.

[2] This is a slight exaggeration. The *Mamur* of Dilling would prevail on the merchants to remove the offending wares from their shops during the seasonal festivals; but he does not recognize the much longer close season observed by the tribe.

disputes or offences (*see* p. 403). Let me add that self-help, fights over women, are outlawed in all three tribes and dealt with as ordinary cases of assault. The assault itself and the matrimonial dispute in the course of which it occurs are sharply separated, and the latter is not admitted as an extenuating circumstance. Nor is it necessary to speak specially of theft and other property offences. The court orders the restitution of the property and inflicts fines or prison sentences on the thief.

Attacks on human life are transferred to the jurisdiction of the District Commissioner or the High Court. Blood revenge (as it existed in Nyima) is outlawed, and the mass flight no longer takes place, but all other obligations, economic or ritual, involved traditionally in the expiation of these crimes are still rigidly adhered to. Thus the Koalib demand and accept blood money, and observe the various *tabus* and ritual rules. The Nyima perform their purification rite *wulikre* even if the homicide has been executed or sent to prison for life. If the criminal is released after a number of years, it becomes all the more important to perform this rite, which now as of old concludes a period of exile. The same is true of Dilling. If the homicide is sentenced to death, his sons perform the blood ritual and pay blood money; if he serves a long prison sentence, it falls to his brothers to perform the rite, and they send some of the blood to him in prison so that the curse of leprosy should be lifted from his family. Again, the prison sentence is, to the people, an equivalent of the traditional self-exile; and before the culprit is apprehended and sent to prison, he would leave Dilling, exiling himself, even if it be only for a day, to escape the curse of leprosy. The blood money has been greatly reduced. The blood money of sixteen cows mentioned in the previous description represents the modern practice; the traditional amount was thirty to forty cows, and often included a number of slaves in addition. The traditional amount varied with the severity of the crime and the anger and bitterness of the victim's family: it thus allowed to some extent for the difference between accidental and intentional killing. The difference seems to have disappeared from the present standardized rule. The blood money is still paid to the chief, and not to the Administration. Indeed, it would lose its specific meaning if it were paid into Government coffers; for it represents not only a fine in the legal sense, but also the price paid for the expiation of a deed which, in Dilling, is a sin no less than a crime.

Oaths and ordeals have survived unchanged, and *kujurs* still reign supreme in that mystic realm which extends human justice beyond the bounds of the rational. It is interesting to note that on one occasion in Nyima the intervention of *kujurs* formed the subject of a lawsuit. The case, which happened in Tendiya, concerned two young men who were courting the same girl. Both had enlisted magic help to win the favour of the girl and her parents: one had secured the services of a famous *kujur* whose speciality was to bless marriages, the other, too late for that, had solicited the assistance of the *kujur*'s brother, who had no ritual

standing. The case itself was mainly about alienation of affection and the refund of the bride-price payments; but this equivocal spiritual assistance, too, came up; in fact, it acquired more prominence than the main issue. The *kujur* and his brother were summoned, and the chief warned them to avoid in future such irresponsible competition. Only a *kujur*, the chief said, is entitled to practise magic of this kind. 'The spirit is a master'—it must not be approached by stealthy, devious routes. The *kujur*'s brother ought to know that he had neither the right nor power to influence the spirit, and if he let himself be bribed again to interfere with the legitimate magic of his brother, he would be severely punished. The court, then, did not question or censure the magic intervention in itself: it only attempted to define its legality, to draw the distinction between *kujurs* and quacks, almost to grant *kujurs* a modern charter.

Tribal law underwent its greatest changes in inter-group jurisdiction. The alien is no longer an outlaw, and offences which occur between groups fall under the same jurisdiction as those committed within the political units. In one case, at least, the pacification of the country has stimulated a spontaneous extension of intertribal jurisdiction. The Koalib of Dere, formerly the enemies of the neighbouring hill tribe of Umm Heitan, entered with that tribe into a blood money agreement of the same type as the agreements which they had concluded with 'friendly' groups. Delami, through the mediation of Dere, later joined this pact. Moreover, the Koalib communities appointed new Chiefs of the Path to act as intermediaries with neighbouring Arab sections in all intertribal conflicts (above all, theft and boundary disputes).

A final phase in inter-group relations is the result of recent Government reforms—the federation of communities and tribes, and the foundation of federal courts. The Koalib groups, as we have heard, form one such federation: Dilling (with the small community Kudur), Ghulfan, Kaduru, a second; the Nyima Hills with Mendel, Wali, Temein, Gulud, Katla, and Karko, the third federation. Like the old tribal treaties of alliance and blood pacts, the new federation draws essentially alien groups more closely together, into some form of interdependence and unity. The new pattern of unification does not follow the old pacts either geographically (as will have been seen) or with regard to their meaning, which was to create enclaves of security, and to mark off, in an area of lawlessness, a few groups whose mutual relations were to be subject to rules and agreements. General pacification has obviated this necessity of enclaves; the new federations also go beyond the goal of creating a machinery designed merely to deal with inter-group conflicts. Their aim is much more intensive co-operation, implying that all political matters and legal disputes should be examined and decided jointly.

One feels that such a co-operation, decreed from above, should rest on some inner affinity, of culture and converging interests. This, however,

is not quite the case. The 'inner affinity' exists in the case of the Koalib federation, which unites sections of common culture, bound together by many common interests (in the field of kinship and religion). The Dilling federation embraces three groups which are of similar (though not identical) culture and language, and are aware of this similarity, but share few interests: thus the focus of many group interests in Kuduru is El Obeid, not Dilling, and Dilling is self-centred rather than interested in Ghulfan or Kaduru. In Nyima, the federation groups together tribes which share neither language nor culture, and which have not a single interest in common. The attention of Gulud, for example, is turned towards the west, towards the bilingual Tullishi, rather than towards the east and Nyima. The prospects of a federation of so artificial structure are problematical. But let me leave this and similar questions—the questions how far traditional ties, cultural affinity, or converging interests are decisive in the fate of political unification—for the wider context of the next, final, chapter.

Conclusion

In the preceding chapters we concluded our comparative description with an attempt to throw into relief the cultures so described as separate individualities, seen against the background of their affinity. The position now seems reversed. The present cultures largely demanded already description as separate entities. If there remains a final aspect, fittingly embodied in a 'conclusion', it is that of comparison. Yet comparison is futile and irrelevant where diversity is complete. The three cultures just described seem devoid of any common denominator on which comparison must fasten. Surprisingly, this is true despite the fact that, in the shaman cult, they share a dominant feature. The common trait seems outweighed by the divergences—the different kinship structure; a deeply contrasted clan concept; marriage without divorce in Dilling, and marriage permitting of easy dissolution in Nyima and Koalib; sexual laxity in Koalib, and great emphasis on chastity in the other tribes; elaborate age-grades versus a fluid organization of adolescence, or none at all. Even chieftainship, common though it is to all three societies, shows a widely different pattern, as in fact we should expect of an institution almost universal in primitive society.

We cannot therefore look for the familiar 'variations of a common theme'. Rather are we faced with the fact that the common theme (shamanism) can appear in so strikingly different settings and be elaborated, not in 'variations', but—to continue the musical simile—in altogether different styles. But the co-existence of such diversity and such affinity is in itself a legitimate, and puzzling, matter for inquiry.

For we must ask these questions: is shamanism indeed a cultural trait which (like chieftainship) can emerge in any culture? Is its functional weight so light that it can be carried by greatly varying social structures,

without causing them to adjust themselves on similar lines? This must indeed be our conclusion.[1]

We cannot stop here in our inquiry. Culture and society shape the mentality typical of, or prevalent in, a group; and shamanism, more than other institutions or religious cults, appears to rest on a specific mentality—that predisposition from which the hysteria of the trance and the neurosis of spirit obsession would easily flow. Are we to conclude that this predisposition is, as it were, culturally 'neutral', capable of being produced in any culture, whatever its other traits and institutions? Or that the predisposition is potentially universal, so that it would, given the stimulus, emerge in any cultural setting? The stimulus itself we can only assume. It must spring from the ever-present urge of man to achieve physical communion with the supernatural, here—through no inner necessity—conceived of as a spirit world.

The answers must be, once more, in the affirmative. For if the mental predisposition were not 'universal', we should expect to find the three shamanistic groups characterized by a special mentality—that is, by a marked leaning towards hysteria, neurosis and related derangements. If the predisposition were not 'neutral' in regard to the cultural setting, we should expect to meet with marked differences on this psychopathological level. Neither, however, is true. Neurosis and other forms of mental derangement are not more frequent in these three groups than anywhere else in the Nuba Mountains. Nor does their (moderate) incidence vary to any marked degree from group to group.

Yet the question arises whether different cultures, differently built and orientated towards different values, would absorb shamanism with equal ease. One might argue that they must exhibit a different degree of strain and maladjustment when embracing a trait which cannot be equally congenial to all. The strain would appear, above all, where the field of shamanism overlaps with the field of action of other institutions.

What we find, however, is complete, though varying, adjustment. Take chieftainship first. The co-existence of the two forms of authority, spiritual and secular, appears perfectly balanced. In Koalib it is solved by vesting the different forms of leadership in two branches of the ruling house; in Nyima secular leadership tends to base itself, among other qualifications, upon that of spirit mastery; and in Dilling kingship and the office of the Great *kujur* are parallel institutions.

Shamanism and kinship authority: in Koalib the shaman and family head exist side by side without weakening each other's status; in Nyima the *kujur* becomes the head of a fluid, transient group overlaying that formed by kindred or clan; in Dilling shamanism is so built into the clan structure that it absorbs unequivocally the prerogatives of headship. Or shamanism and secular law: Koalib society turned the former into

[1] The ethnologist-historian who might here be inclined to point to the influence of cultural 'borrowing' would find evidence to support his views. We remember that shamanism has lately found acceptance and a congenial response in Heiban—a group in which spirit-possession was until recently unknown.

a handmaiden of tribal justice; in Nyima it falls to the *kujur* to voice the interests of the group *vis-à-vis* the forces of self-help; in Dilling the *gindi* appears as a buffer between the remote realm of the seer and the concrete, everyday business of judicial action.

Yet there exist signs of a varying strain and maladjustment in the three groups. We cannot otherwise explain the markedly varying reactions of individuals under social stress: once more we turn to suicide and to the emotional instability which is its immediate motivation.

In Koalib suicide is probably extremely rare; according to informants (who cannot recall any cases) it is non-existent. In Nyima it is moderately frequent. In Dilling the number is comparatively high.

In Nyima I recorded these four cases in a group of about 2,000: An old man stabbed himself after long illness. A girl hanged herself after a quarrel with her mother. A young man, just circumcised, shot himself because he was suffering from an incurable disease (cerebro-spinal meningitis). Finally a case of attempted suicide, mentioned before: a young man who had seduced a girl of his own clan and wanted to marry her, well knowing that this was impossible, tried to end his life after flight into the wilderness.

In Dilling, among a somewhat smaller population, I recorded ten cases, but informants were certain there were many more, though not remembered. Two women hanged themselves because they had leprosy. An old man hanged himself after a serious quarrel with the king. Two other women hanged themselves, one because all her family had died and she was left alone in the world, and the other because of the shame of having a daughter who had run away from home and become a prostitute in El Obeid. In the case of four other women, the reasons were unknown. The last case, of attempted suicide, I have described before: it concerned a man who tried to kill himself and his wife because the two could not live together, and divorce was impossible.

At first sight, the uneven incidence of suicide in the three groups is puzzling. All the instances typify the nature of suicide as an escape—from a society into which one no longer fits, mentally or physically. But the two types of suicide which we encountered before, the sudden decision after some shock, and the decision to end one's life after a long period of brooding and despair, occur side by side, without clear distribution. The visible motives for the suicide fail to illuminate the varying frequency in the three tribes. The place in society for the old and lonely; the threat of incurable disease; the treatment by society of offences against exogamous rules—all these are equal in the societies we are comparing. Of the cultural traits, finally, which in the other Nuba groups appear correlated with a high incidence of suicide, only one seems to apply in this new context. The emphasis on sexual jealousy and violence appears, with suicide, in Nyima and Dilling, while both are missing in Koalib.

A closer examination of our three societies, however, suggests a new

correlation. For we discover two traits, varying according to a scale which is also that of the suicides. One is the varying emphasis on chastity and matrimonial fidelity. In Koalib both are lax; offences evoke no jealousy, and are dealt with in a catholic spirit. In Nyima, too, sex morality is lax; but offences demand a solemn rite of expiation, and infidelity becomes the occasion for unbridled vindictiveness. In Dilling chastity is highly valued, seduction or infidelity are dealt with severely, and the society expects violent responses as well as severe punishment. The second trait, partly revealed in our case histories, concerns divorce. It is purely a 'civil' matter in Koalib; it is possible and amply practised in Nyima; while in Dilling the tendency is to exclude it altogether.

Our scale, then, is that of a greater or lesser rigidity in the enforcement of certain rules of conduct. In other words, the individual who rejects these rules easily finds a place in Koalib society; he can refit himself into Nyima society when paying the penalty; and might, in 'puritan' Dilling, be incapable of finding a niche for himself. Indeed, we remember that in the minds of the Dilling people suicide and murder are closely associated with the unpopular contingency of divorce.

These varying traits may be viewed against the background of the, similarly varying, conception of sex relations. It is fluid in Koalib, following no rigid formula; in Nyima we meet with a pronounced dichotomy of male and female principle, which pervades the moral code and ritual obligations; Dilling subscribes to the full polarity of a moiety organization. To translate these conceptual values into terms of human conduct: in Koalib individual relationships between the sexes can form most freely; in Nyima—among the majority of clans—the relationship of man and woman, the urge which draws them to one another, must be overshadowed by the knowledge that now one, now the other, stands under the threat of supernatural sanctions; while in Dilling the bonds between man and woman must follow the pattern prescribed by a rigid and all-embracing social framework.

We can pursue this thought a step further. Let us consider social reaction towards that paramount rejection of the social code—homicide. In Koalib homicide entails the payment of blood money, but no revenge; the ritual avoidances imposed upon the culprit can be easily evaded by emigration to another village. In Nyima he must face revenge (the response of violence so cultivated in that group) and self-exile. But the latter is loosely interpreted and depends ultimately on a test of strength between the warring families. Moreover, after the conventional battle to settle the revenge, expiation and conciliation follow easily. Dilling society permits no revenge; self-exile, to a distant tribe and for a long period, is enforced by supernatural fears. The culprit bears for several years the stigma of uncleanness, which is removed only after complicated rites of expiation.

In Koalib, then, homicide is settled almost in a 'civil' transaction. In Nyima the sanction is self-help at the hands of the kindred which

suffered the loss. In Dilling the response is a purely moral one, and spiritual pressure, expressing the group code in the abstract, replaces both revenge and punitive action. Here we may also point out that the distinction between homicide in the clan or kindred, which is regarded as 'sin', and ordinary homicide, which is merely 'crime', is made only in Koalib and Nyima. In Dilling all killing is equally evil; to kill a fellow tribesman or a brother is, in this closely knit society, a crime (or sin) of equal severity and repulsiveness.

Once more the three groups differ in the rigidity with which they uphold their code of 'normal' existence. They differ also in the inclusiveness of the moral conscience behind the code. Only in Dilling does it embrace the tribe at large and reflect, not the incidental and individual urge of retaliation, but group morality as such. There it is more formidable because more abstract and inevitable.

Now, we have already suggested that the correlation between social rigidity or inclusiveness and incidence of suicide is an intrinsic and logical one.[1] We cannot, of course, interpret it in the sense of an absolute law, implying that the particular deviations or lapses from 'normal' existence shown in our case histories must, in these particular societies, invariably lead to suicide. Rather are we concerned with a diffuse predisposition, with that general bias throughout the group which is revealed statistically in the frequency of typical reactions. And here we can state (and consider proven) that in our three groups the two which permit less latitude to 'misfits' also foster the suicidal predisposition; and that where individuals deviating, by accident or from choice, from 'normality' are least able to find legitimate alternatives of living, the group must lean most strongly towards that ultimate escape.

Here, finally, we can link up with the theme of shamanism, which started us on our train of thought. It completes our picture of the three cultural individualities. For its varying shape in the three groups now falls into place against the same scale of social rigidity and inclusiveness. In all three societies the shaman cult is the focus of individual aims in life, and spirit priesthood the supreme (though perhaps not always conscious) goal. In Koalib the vocation of the spirit priests—servants of unpredictable and fortuitous masters—leaves the freest scope to individuality. In Nyima many of the spirits are conceived of as hereditary, and the conduct and character of the human vessel are thus prescribed with some rigidity. In Dilling spirit-possession is governed by the rigid norms of the symbiotic clan: the individual is fitted tightly into a predestined universe; his capabilities and chances of self-expression on this highest level of tribal achievement—communion with the spirit world—are prescribed by laws eternal.

[1] *See* Chapters IV and VI, Conclusion.

CHAPTER XII

EPILOGUE: TRENDS AND PROSPECTS

THE theme of this final chapter is the future of the Nuba tribes—a future shaped, above all, by three factors: the modification of cultural and political boundaries; modern chieftainship; and the new moral code which our system of law and order is imposing upon the people.

We shall thus be dealing with the cultural changes which are the result, planned or inadvertent, of our Native policy. We shall constantly face the question, which changes to foster and to embody in the social and political system which we are building up, and which to discourage and avoid.

There is no royal road to its solution. The invocation of Indirect Rule gives little guidance; its common-sense version—the advice, 'as little change as possible'—convincing though it may sound, is uncomfortably vague. Cultural changes are like the proverbial snowball; you can start it rolling, but you cannot predict its final shape or goal. The first step in the cultural transformation which we have called into being is well defined; its aim is pacification, and thus the assurance of the physical survival of these war-torn tribes. The next step is already less assured: for the economic development which follows in the wake of pacification, still subserving the assurance of physical survival, entails far-reaching new changes. The further this process advances, the further its goal and limits recede from the view. For each change may in turn cause other changes: and all must finally be reflected in the growing and changing body of norms of conduct, which we must either endorse (as Law) or deny. We can only weigh new values against old, and aim at a balance which must be in the nature of a compromise.

In assessing these values, the administrator and anthropologist are apt to differ. The former would speak of progress, welfare, happiness; while the latter operates with a different concept altogether—that of (internal and external) adjustment. Whether or not the native society in its original, pre-contact, state was in this sense more successfully adjusted is a moot question, which I decline to consider. The alternative is not between leaving the native society alone and remodelling it; for the remodelling is already a fact: we can only consider its direction and scope. I have in turn been accused of trying to preserve a primitive group 'as a museum's piece', and of suggesting changes in what has clearly been a 'happy' mode of life for centuries. This double accusation acquits me, at least, of one-sidedness.

Culture Change and Arab Influence

The cultural map of the Nuba Mountains is being re-drawn to-day by the spreading influence of Arab civilization. These changes are partly

a result, direct or indirect, of the modern Government institutions; but they also represent an independent, and inevitable, development. As we have seen, the cultural map of the Nuba tribes was never quite static, and its boundaries never quite without overlapping: cultural affinities co-existed with divergent, individual cultural designs. Certain of these affinities are too deeply embedded in the various cultures to allow questions of origin or derivation. But others reflect a recent and easily traceable mutual assimilation—an assimilation, moreover, of which the groups in question are fully conscious. Arabization is thus only one of several trends of assimilation. It is possibly the strongest; it is certainly the most widespread, as the alien group which is its carrier is the most widespread in the Nuba Mountains. It is also unique, in the sense that it operates through new and unique incentives.

The mutual assimilation as it materialized between the Nuba groups falls in three categories.

First, we discover a superficial assimilation of habits and fashions which springs from aesthetic and similar psychological motives. Take, for example, the adoption of the bell-shaped Mesakin roof by the Korongo; or the exchange, by the women of Otoro, of their old leather belt for the more attractive (as they themselves say) grass bustle in Tira style. The adoption of dances from neighbouring groups (e.g. Koalib dances in Heiban), though involving a deeper psychological response, is essentially of the same order. And so is, incidentally, the fascination which modern European metal goods, buckles or key-chains, seem to hold for the Nuba everywhere.

Secondly, there is the conspicuous adoption of magic practices. It seems that every group is ready to import alien magic which would enrich its own arsenal of supernatural weapons, at least if it can be incorporated in the fashion of a new technique, without necessitating wider social readjustments. We remember the Korongo locust magician in Moro, and the Tira snake-bite expert in Otoro; the Koalib *kujurs* who are so well received in Heiban; and the Tima and Gulud grain priests even in isolated, self-conscious Tullishi.

The third category embraces forms of assimilation which entail a more far-reaching social reconstruction. Of these, however, we discover very few instances—the initiation rite which the Otoro claim to have 'borrowed' from Tira, and possibly the Nyima circumcision, which is said to be of Ghulfan origin. Though the fact of 'borrowing' is still conscious, it is partly enveloped in the sphere of mythical events and origins, and no longer open to empirical examination. But we can see that this form of assimilation materialized only under a strong social stimulus: it occurred when the social structure was predisposed towards some such innovation, through which it would fulfil itself in a higher degree, so that the 'borrowed' institution fitted into a ready mould. In Otoro, this mould was the growing chieftainship; in the Nyima tribe, perhaps the system of age classes and the whole conception of male adolescence.

No major assimilation occurred in the economic field. Tribes would open a barter trade in commodities like cotton or tobacco; but they did not exchange productive techniques, not even farming tools or species of crops. Nor did tribes used to bull and goat husbandry learn to appreciate cows and cows' milk. Evidently, since the Nuba tribes lived largely on the same level of civilization and material culture, there could be little incentive to imitation, even in tribes otherwise ready to 'borrow' cultural traits. The different methods of production represented varieties, not degrees, of technical efficiency: their respective benefits were too uncertain to suggest a remodelling of working habits.[1] There was one exception. The Daju in the western corner of the Nuba Mountains offered the example of a distinctly superior material culture: and here we also find 'borrowing' of productive technique—of the Daju looms and blacksmith craft, which found their way to Kamdang and even to backward Tullishi.

We remember the disparaging attitude with which many Nuba tribes view the cultural make-up of their neighbours. This cultural conceit does not interfere with their readiness to 'borrow'. The Otoro, who have consciously adopted Tira customs and habits, have not changed their opinion of that tribe, as of a treacherous and morally inferior group; the Tullishi, though shocked by the morals of the Tima and Daju, were willing to try their magic and handicrafts. The peoples thus view each other's culture, not as an indivisible whole, but as a composite, superior and attractive in some ways, but inferior, useless, even repulsive, in others.

Only in one case have the Nuba accepted an alien culture almost wholly as superior and worthy of imitation—Arab civilization. This acceptance of Arab superiority rests on two facts: on the conspicuously superior material equipment with which the Arabs appeared in the Nuba Mountains—rifles, long, heavy spears, swords, horses; and on the political supremacy which they could claim, either by the proof of brute force or by their association with the permanent Government of the country (pre-British or British). This supremacy lends to the customs and typical cultural possessions of this race the hall-mark of excellence and refinement. Thus Arab names are becoming the fashion, and habits and material objects are adopted, not—or not only—because they are intrinsically useful, but because they stand for a higher form of living.

Arab and Islamic civilization in the Sudan is not uniform. There are, above all, the two cultural levels, of the semi-nomadic herdsmen and of the Arab cities. The Nuba came in contact with both: with the former, as neighbours or enemies in the field—that is, as group with group; with the latter, mainly as servants, slaves, soldiers, visitors—that is, as individuals temporarily enveloped in an alien culture. The Arab herdsman possesses Islamic culture only in a primitive form, without most of its classical features, such as the segregation of the women or the rules of

[1] Later, when the people became assured of the benefits of alien methods of production—the cultivation of cotton as a commercial proposition, or of a locust-proof species of grain—they were very ready to experiment and learn (*see* Chapter IV).

Koranic law, which are essentially aspects of the urban civilization. These cultural influences could act upon the Nuba societies only through the irregular, casual agency of individuals: as we shall see, none has reached the Nuba Mountains. Altogether, the Nuba adoption of Arab civilization is largely one of isolated, disconnected traits.

Like the mutual assimilation of the Nuba tribes, this adoption of an alien culture reveals its threefold aspect. As regards the first aspect, the superficial adoption of habits or elements of material culture, intrinsic and reflected values are often indistinguishable. If the Nuba seem attracted by Arab ornaments, dances, fashions of dress, or culinary habits like tea-drinking, it is impossible to say how far the (primary) attraction lay in the adopted traits as such, in their aesthetic or sensory appeal, or in the fact that they offered access to superior ways of living. The Nuba did not quite overlook the one-sidedness of the Arab superiority in material culture. It was convincing in a field which was vital to the physical survival of the tribes—the technique of warfare. But no Nuba would think of imitating the homesteads or domestic utensils of the Arabs, which are much inferior to his own. Unhappily, the relative usefulness is not invariably as conspicuous: how, indeed, are the Nuba to know that the nice-tasting tea and sugar are useless as food, and not worth the grain or beans which they must sell in order to be able to buy the new delicacies?

The adoption of clothing in Arab fashion stands somewhat apart from the other forms of assimilation in material culture. In tribes whose traditional dress was nil or nearly nil, this change means more than merely a superficial copying of habits: it affects the whole conception of sexual shame, and also the relationship between the sexes.[1] In the Nuba tribes it is always the men who first adopt clothing—at least a shirt that covers their private parts—while the women for a long time afterwards still remain faithful to their old dress habits. At a certain point, however, one finds that the men will demand that the women, too, assume a less-revealing dress. Sexual shame, extended to the other sex, becomes part of the 'possessive' aspect of marriage. The young men of Heiban are such pioneers of the new morality: recently they demanded that their girl-brides who were pupils and servants in the nearby Methodist Mission should wear more 'proper' clothing instead of the traditional, largely negative dress, which the mission was encouraging. The change in dress habits may thus be called a moral or psychological change. Yet it does not involve any real adjustment in social institutions: indeed, it stops short at these. In Dilling and Kaduru, for example, where both men and women have adopted full clothing, the women still revert to their primitive traditional dress in the rites of marriage or childbirth or in the great tribal ceremonies.

Religious assimilation is inspired by the readiness to adopt any new

[1] It was impossible in this book to do more than touch upon dress and similar habits, which could not be treated without going into such complex problems as aesthetic sense or sexual shame.

and promising technique of supernatural control rather than by the appreciation of a superior creed. Mohammedanism spread in the Nuba Mountains largely in disconnected elements, of purely magic significance. The Arab *fiki* finds among the Nuba all too credulous buyers of his charms and magic roots; we have also spoken of their wide use of the Koran: it is treated purely as a magic implement, an instrument of ordeal, working with the mechanical, automatic precision which characterized the traditional magic paraphernalia—the spear of a grain priest, the axe of rain-makers, and the like. The acceptance of Mohammedanism as a higher form of religion is limited, and remains on the surface. Its agents and first converts are mostly soldiers and policemen, Government-sponsored chiefs, ex-servants and occasionally ex-slaves—that is, individuals who experienced the superiority of Islamic society in its most conspicuous as well as literal form. The chief of Nyima, for example, is fond of parading his knowledge of the Mohammedan genesis which he picked up in the Army; to him, it is more convincing than the tribal mythology, since it is 'written in books'. Often the motives behind this conversion are stated naïvely. A sub-chief of Otoro, an ex-policeman, said to me once, during a discussion of rain magic, that he, of course, did not believe in rain-makers and rain sacrifices: he knew that 'rain came from Allah'. As there is a mission working in this tribe, I asked if he meant the Mohammedan or Christian God? He replied: 'I mean the Allah of the *Hakuma* and the police in Talodi.'

This acceptance of Islamic principles might seem to carry within it the possibility of a sincere and complete spiritual change. If one really believed in the heavenly provenance of the rain, one could clearly not countenance the public outcry against rain-makers who have failed in their duty or persons accused of witchcraft and similar evil practices. But there is no sign that the conversion of the Nuba chiefs or other apparent proselytes has gone so deep. If a chief restrains his people from revenging themselves on a faithless rain-maker, he does so to prevent a breach of the peace, not because he disbelieves in these magic powers. I have quoted the case of the man who attempted to bewitch the rain in Tira and who was convicted of this crime by the enlightened Otoro and Tira chiefs. Another chief, in Kamdang, who had adopted all the external attributes of Islam, went even so far as to order the arrest of a rain-maker as a preventive measure when the rainy season approached; for it was known that the rain-maker was nursing a grievance, and feared that he would revenge himself by stopping the rain.

The influence of Islam has not remodelled habitual conduct to any considerable extent. Neither prayers nor fasts have as yet found their way into Nuba life. Only the Mohammedan food avoidance, of pig, has spread widely. Precluding the communal meals of a favourite sacrificial animal, it has affected social relations in the tribe. We can, I believe, explain the ready adoption of this isolated Islamic observance. It represents a feature easily absorbed in the tribal culture. A food *tabu*

is, as such, no new thing, and finds its place in the system of traditional food avoidances, though the group which it defines may be of a new order. But this aspect, too, can be brought in harmony with the traditional social structure. Let me quote the example of Miri (a tribe not described in this book): almost the whole Miri tribe now observes the prohibition of eating pig—the whole tribe, that is, with the exception of its priest. Now the spiritual leaders of the community stand in various ways under special rules which separate them, in everyday habits, from the rest of the group. The new food observance, with its rule and exception, only re-creates a familiar relationship in a new situation.

The social structure of the Arabs, their kinship system, their system of marriage or inheritance, has made no impress on the Nuba cultures. Certain limited structural changes of this kind which have occurred in some Nuba tribes and which brought about a certain similarity with Arab practices are due, not to Arab influence as such, but to general changes in the conditions of Nuba life. The change from matrilineal to patrilineal inheritance of property, a result of the changed nature of property, is one instance (*see* p. 340); another, the easing of divorce rules under the impact of cosmopolitan urban life (*see* p. 435). The Arab example, however, plays a part, indirectly: for Arab society offers an example, an ever-present model, of cultural solutions other than those embodied in traditional tribal practices. We remember circumcision in Nyima, 'ante-dated' and lifted out of its traditional context, owing to the changed living conditions of the tribe, but perhaps suggested by the Arab institution (*see* p. 413).

Juvenile circumcision, both male and female, also represents the only instance of an adoption of Arab institutions which entail far-reaching social readjustments. The new institution is not merely grafted on to the traditional culture. The law which governs far-reaching assimilation between the Nuba groups applies in a sense also to this cultural change. Male circumcision does not appear at random and as an entirely new custom in the Nuba tribes. It appeared only in tribes in which the practice as such was known, though it had previously been limited to specific social groups or grades in the society, i.e. in Tira and Tullishi. The new incentive merely led to the extension of the custom beyond the old limits. Again, then, the more radical cultural assimilation sets in only where a certain preparedness for the new trait exists.

Female circumcision appears in the Sudan in the two forms of clitoridectomy and of the severe 'pharaonic' operation. The former, as we have seen, is indigenous in some Nuba groups. It is also practised by the Arab tribes in the west and south-west of Kordofan (Messirya and Humr), and has spread to their Nuba neighbours—the peoples of Kamdang, the Miri, and the Daju.[1] The Hawazma Arabs in the eastern Nuba

[1] My knowledge of the Daju is limited to the tribe in Western Kordofan. I cannot say whether female circumcision is typical of Daju culture at large, or whether it is practised only by this one section, as a result of Arab influence.

Mountains practise the pharaonic circumcision, which thus reached the Nuba tribes in that part—or one Nuba tribe so far as my material goes, the Tira. We need concern ourselves with the physiological facts only in so far as they bear on this sociological discussion. In the pharaonic operation the labia majora are cut away, and the vulva made to grow together, to be re-opened in the act of defloration. Virginity and the consummation of marriage thus receive a new, strong emphasis, which is indeed expressed (though without much conviction) in the sex-morality of this Nuba tribe. I believe, however, that in the Nuba adoption of female circumcision this aspect is only incidental. Another aspect, applying to both types of female circumcision, is paramount: and in it the 'preparedness' of the Nuba culture for the new usage is again manifest. Female circumcision never appears by itself in the Nuba Mountains: it accompanies or succeeds the adoption of juvenile male circumcision. It thus comes to express the conception of a balance of the sexes, much discussed in this book—that female life should parallel male life, and a *rite de passage* of the women duplicate one of the men. Indeed, where female circumcision appears, this conception of balance is deeply rooted in the social structure. We can even venture this prognosis: in the Nuba cultures which elaborate this conception of a 'balance', and where male circumcision already exists (Nyima, Tullishi), female circumcision will follow.

This, however, is the only forecast which we can venture. Whether male circumcision will remain bound up with the limiting factors which we discovered is impossible to say, as indeed the final limits of Arab assimilation depend on too fluid factors to be predicted with any certainty. But advance there will be. The increasing contacts of the younger generation with the centres of Arab civilization must foster the superficial assimilation which is our first category. With the growing numbers of police and soldiers recruited in the Jebels, assimilation of the second type will spread. Moreover, any change—political and economic—which underlines Arab superiority, or merely introduces the issue of social superiority, will work for assimilation also. Thus the Nuba chiefs invariably tend to buttress their social position in the tribe by adopting features of the acknowledged superior civilization, and in turn set a new standard in their own community. That we invest them with swords and robes of honour, offer them tea in Arab fashion, and encourage them to visit Arab cities or Government offices staffed with Arabs, endorses their own leanings. True, we also insist on Nuba village schools, meant to keep aloof from Arab influence, or occasionally design romantically savage garbs for tribal police: but these efforts can hardly count for more than an odd detour in an otherwise straight road to 'progress'.

Arab influence has spread unequally through the Nuba Mountains. The southern and western hills, Korongo, Mesakin, Moro, Tullishi, are least affected: there men and women still go naked or clad in their scanty customary garb; rifles and broad-bladed Arab spears, however, are common, and Arab charm-sellers find a good market also in these

tribes. In the north, in Koalib, Dilling, Kaduru, and, partly, Nyima, the material assimilation is far advanced, and religious and moral assimilation, too, have made progress. The eastern hills, Heiban, Laro, Otoro, and Tira, stand midway between these extremes.[1] Neither physical environment (the accessibility of the hills) nor social structure can help us to understand this distribution. We know that the northern groups have in the past lived in friendship with Arab tribes; in modern times, the northern hills have proved the most fertile centres for the recruiting of soldiers and police, while very few have as yet come from the southern and western tribes. But though it is obviously true that the more intensive contacts have furthered assimilation, both seem to derive from the same readiness or inclination. The opportunities for contacts and co-operation with the Arabs have probably been the same in all areas: but different groups have responded differently to the same external stimulus. Certain recent evidence bears this out. After the punitive patrol in Nyima, crowds of young men, impressed by the superiority of the Government, joined Army and police. Similar action in the Mesakin hills had no such effect: it seemed to have caused the people to withdraw into themselves, and to become sullen and suspicious. In the last resort, then, the varying readiness for cultural assimilation must be accepted as a final fact—whether in the nature of a historical accident (reflecting, for example, the effect of individual leadership) or a psychological predisposition, we cannot here decide.[2]

The mutual cultural assimilation of the Nuba tribes is far from achieving a common Nuba culture. Does, then, this new assimilation to a common alien model promise a more comprehensive ultimate uniformity? The evidence which we possess does not, or not fully, support this view. Though assimilation may reach an advanced stage, the consciousness of the traditional culture and its individuality remains strongly alive. On the contrary, it even becomes more pronounced, as if in reaction to the encroaching assimilation. The marriage laws of Dilling and the spreading of the *kujur* cult in the northern tribes are convincing examples. This reaction is most marked in the religious sphere. Paradoxically, the stronger Arab influence becomes, even in this very sphere, the more proudly will the people speak of their own pagan rituals and magic. In Dilling, Nyima, or Koalib, the belief in tribal magic has become a last powerful stronghold of cultural consciousness. Again, we cannot say whether it will remain such a stronghold, or whether this reaction represents only a last flare-up of the group vitality.

But we may point out this: The complete assimilation can only be

[1] But there are the strongly arabicized communities of Kamdang and Miri in the south-west, and Tira Mande in the east.

[2] Individual leadership of an inspired shaman played a part in breaking the Nyima rebellion and establishing friendly relations with the British—as it also played a part in raising the rebellion (*see* p. 453). The coincidence, in the northern hills, of extensive Arab assimilation and social systems subscribing to strong individual leadership in the spiritual sphere is suggestive. Its fuller examination, however, must be left for another context.

achieved through regular intermarriage. It would bring the offspring under the strongest, kinship-supported influence of Arab thought and ways of life; it would affect kinship conceptions, marriage, inheritance, and thus the whole social structure. As yet, the Nuba tribes have shrunk from this final step.

Political Federation

Cultural affinity and assimilation must gain special significance in the modern policy of federating small tribes into larger political and judicial units.[1] For cultural unity is the cement of political integration. Whether it may be more—its very foundation—we will now attempt to examine.

Let me first state the case for federation. It represents an essential step in the political evolution of weak, small native groups towards self-government. It confers upon them, at once, certain political benefits, from which they would be excluded if they stood by themselves, and promises more in the future. Thus the larger, federated unit can be invested with courts of wider powers of jurisdiction than small tribal courts could attain. It is also equipped with a treasury through which the people can administer their own financial resources. The full measure of this fiscal self-administration is still far distant: but the limited financial control already granted to the federated groups provides the preliminary training in self-government. Schools, hospitals, police-posts, markets —the various institutions of an advanced Native Administration—are of necessity established for large areas, and thus for several tribes in common; they create a community of interest which the federation could endorse and consolidate. It might be claimed also that small, isolated groups would profit, as it were, educationally from a closer association with groups of a more advanced type: they would acquire that wider, less parochial viewpoint on which their political future largely depends.

These federations unite groups living in adjacent areas. Thus they cannot always utilize cultural kinship, which is often independent of geographical propinquity. Indeed, occasionally the federation (if federation there must be) will have to be one between groups of widely different culture, as in the case of an isolated community like Tullishi, or in large-scale schemes of federations which go beyond single tribes (the Otoro or Tira, or the Nyima). The crucial test of the interdependence of cultural and political unity lies in the working of the new federal courts. For the application of the law, the conceptions of right and wrong, are a direct expression of cultural consciousness; in these courts of law, too, the different groups will reveal most convincingly their readiness and ability to co-operate and to respect each other's institutions. Now, the readiness may be established beyond doubt: but the dissimilarity of culture would severely strain the ability.

The following case may serve as illustration. I recorded it at Salara, in Nyima, in the court of the newly extended Nyima federation. It

[1] This policy was launched in 1938, and is still developing.

concerned an adultery of unusual severity, committed by a grain priest with his brother's wife, which happened in one of the allied tribes, Gulud, and was taken to the federal court by the chief of that tribe. The case was tried by the *Mek* of Salara, assisted by several other Nyima chiefs and the chief of Gulud. To begin with, the examination and discussion had to be carried on in Arabic and through an interpreter, since the Nyima chiefs had no Gulud, and the accused and witnesses no Nyima. The *Mek* of Salara expressed his horror (as every Nyima would) at this incestuous crime; the Gulud people simply nodded in agreement, saying: 'Yes, it is bad, very bad'—it was difficult to say how far they really shared these sentiments. The Salara chief asked the chief of Gulud what the tribal custom (*awaid*) was in offences of this kind. The Gulud people replied, humbly and a little frightened, that they 'had no custom'. They were disbelieved: they reiterated their denial (of whose real meaning I am ignorant—possibly they only meant that they knew of no secular punishment for this kinship crime). Eventually the Nyima chiefs decided to treat this case like their own cases of grave adultery. Here, however, a new difficulty arose; for the fine which the Nyima chiefs suggested staggered the Gulud people. The sentence had to be greatly reduced, till it found a level which seemed reasonable to the Gulud.

This may seem an extreme case. But a very similar situation would arise if, for example, a tribe like Heiban, which practises marriage by capture, had to submit disputes of this nature to a court to many members of which the custom could have no meaning or justification. A situation of this kind did partly arise in the Otoro-Tira court, whose Otoro members often fail to appreciate cultural peculiarities of the other tribe. It is true, of course, that the chiefs and court members who are ignorant of the customary practices of their allies can always ask, as did the Nyima chiefs: 'What is your custom?' But this solicited quotation of the tribal code is far removed from the spontaneous application that goes with the full knowledge of the culture. Often the information thus obtained will be incorrect or one-sided; at its best, it would invest the rules of conduct with an artificial, theoretical quality, robbing the judgement of its essential moral obviousness.

It is true also that certain chiefs have won a reputation which has spread beyond their own tribe (e.g. *Mek* Amina of Salara or *Mek* Arno of Otoro), so that members of other groups, with different culture, will spontaneously seek their advice or submit disputes to their arbitration. But the evidence shows that this happens only where the traditional tribal jurisdiction failed to please—or would fail to please if it were appealed to. The political unification of groups of different culture harbours the danger of a double law: it offers to disaffected elements the appeal to a law other than their own—that is, to a law which, being alien, may also prove more helpful. Nor need the difference lie in the law itself. We are speaking of societies in change: it is only necessary that one of the allied groups had advanced farther in this respect than

the others, or one chief shown himself more ready than another to break with tradition. (I have quoted an instance on p. 162.) It is clearly necessary also that the group and the chief to whose law and jurisdiction one would thus appeal occupy a superior, commanding position in the federation of tribes. This introduces the viewpoint of the equality, by their own cultural standards, of the allied groups.

We have at several occasions met with the tendency of tribes conscious of their individuality to exaggerate the cultural differences which separate them from other groups, and to speak of these groups disparagingly, as if they belonged to an inferior, and stranger, order of existence. Subjected to the tests of empirical evidence, these statements will often be found to be incorrect, and the sentiments behind them without foundation. But it would be against their meaning to measure them by the standards of empirical truth. In a sense, they cannot be called true or false; they belong to a layer of beliefs and doctrines which itself sets the standards of truth in the society. They form part of the ideology through which groups affirm their collective individuality and their existence as groups. The increased contacts and the deepening knowledge which tribes now have of one another have hardly touched this ideology, which must render unification difficult and precarious.

Modern conditions have even supplied new, concrete foundations for these tribal doctrines of inequality. They lie in the higher level of material civilization (measured by the supreme standard of Arab assimilation) or in the more efficient adjustment to modern administrative demands which certain tribes have achieved. The advanced group and its leader will thus feel confirmed in their attitude of superiority. The union of tribes will be weighted unequally in favour of one or the other member-group, and the federation on an equal basis will approach to a political union founded on dominance.

This trend is very noticeable in the Nyima and the Otoro-Tira federations. The Paramount Chief of Nyima, who is most keenly interested in the political situation in other Nuba communities, frequently mentioned to me that in his opinion he should be put in charge of all the more primitive Nuba tribes—for example, the ill-reputed Tullishi; he assured me that all political difficulties in these groups would at once disappear. The Otoro chief, again, is jealously defending the moral superiority, real or imaginary, of his tribe. He would himself settle all legal disputes in his own group and never allow them to come before the federal court, so that its records invariably show the other party in the federation as the lawless and unruly elements. His efforts to build up or preserve this tribal prestige extend to non-political events as well. During the tribal gathering of 1938, held in the presence of the Governor of the province and other guests of honour, he stopped a wrestling match between his tribe and the Tira, which formed part of the programme of festivities, when it became clear that the Tira were the better team. In these and similar aspects of intertribal co-operation the personality

of the chief must count for much. Under less dominating and jealous leaders the group differences might prove less harmful to mutual understanding.

One might argue that the modern union can utilize, and strengthen, all the new contacts and forms of co-operation which must arise between neighbours at peace. In a few cases these contacts are indeed intimate enough to allow intermarriage, mutual help in times of need, or a loose co-operation in ritual and ceremonial events (e.g. between Korongo and Mesakin, Tullishi and Gulud, or Nyima-Nyitil and Dilling). But in other cases the contacts are too superficial and too vaguely defined to replace the lacking cultural affinity. The economic co-operation of the Nuba tribes is with the urban centres rather than with one another; and intercourse similarly stretches beyond neighbouring groups, being attracted by the labour markets in distant cities.

The balance seems thus heavily weighted against the union of culturally unrelated groups. But we must also consider the lesson of the political evolution of the Nuba tribes. Political unification and alliances were not absent under traditional conditions. We have spoken of the extension of the 'areas of common peace', of inter-tribal laws, of pacts of friendship, and of tribal ambassadors. Like the modern federation, the old political alliances were established between neighbouring groups; they varied widely in compass and strength; above all, they united both groups closely akin culturally and ethnically, and groups of diverse culture and ethnic descent. We discover this law behind the political evolution: the further removed the allied groups were culturally, the more fundamental was the difference between the laws valid in the single group and those governing the intergroup co-operation. This twofold relationship appeared on three levels:

(1) The system of law valid in the single group is extended over the larger unit of allied groups. This strict 'extension' of the orbit of the law evolved only (but not invariably) between groups of common culture and language in which the consciousness of this cultural affinity was endorsed by beliefs in common origin and ethnic descent (e.g. Otoro and Moro).

(2) A new law, different from that valid in the single group, governs inter-group relations: it is still a law in the secular, political sense, implying the concepts of redress and responsibility. This modified 'extension' occurred between groups linked by related culture and language, though not necessarily by beliefs in ethnic unity. Examples are the three tribes Heiban-Abol-Laro or the tribal sections of the Koalib, in which homicide in the single group entailed blood feud, and between the allied groups, blood money.

(3) The group-law allows of no 'extension': inter-group relations are governed by magic, sacred pacts which preclude the question of redress and responsibility, and admit only rites of expiation and supernatural sanctions. This was the situation where the alliance embraced groups of diverse culture and descent, like Otoro and Tira, Nyima and Katla, Dilling and Kaduru.

The significance of this law of political evolution for the modern federation is not easy to assess. The aims of the latter differ widely from those of the traditional inter-group pacts. But old and new alliances are akin in the psychological readjustment which they imply—the readiness of the groups for mutual concessions, and their respect for each other's institutions and integrity. The sentiments embodied in the old alliances will thus survive, or be revived, in the modern tribal federation. In the federation of groups possessing an identical or akin culture they will indeed foster the wider orbit, the full mutual understanding, vital to the success of political union. Difference of culture did not, as we saw, preclude inter-group co-operation in the past: but it was of narrow scope and often mystic nature. It is doubtful if the modern union, established where the old pacts had once been valid, could derive much strength from the surviving sentiments of unity. If, moreover, we are hoping that a federation of heterogeneous groups, once founded, would in time smooth out the cultural barriers, the old tribal pacts teach differently. In their sense, the political union of culturally akin groups, and the union possible between alien groups, belong to different worlds. The latter throws into relief rather than blurs cultural divergences.

The conclusion of these ancient pacts across the barrier of culture must have been at least as momentous an innovation as the modern federation of unrelated tribes would be to-day. Though the latter cannot inherit the sentiments of unity which the former could command, it can follow its model. Its lesson is that cultural diversity can be overcome by vital common interests. They were, of old, the elimination of mutually destructive warfare, or the ransoming of captives: it rests with us to invest the modern federation with equally persuasive interests. From a practical viewpoint, this means that the federations should be built up *pari passu* with such common interests. The promise of joint self-government can hold little persuasiveness for groups which have hardly awoken to the principle of tribal unity. Hospitals or schools will prove much stronger foci of common interest. Altogether, the founding of the federation is only the beginning, not the climax, of the administrative task. For the federation does not create spontaneously its own moral support and sentiments of unity: they must be built up planfully, through education—in the widest sense of the word. The supernatural, mystic appeal behind the old pacts cannot be transplanted into the present. We must use, instead, the appeal of reason. The administrator must be prepared to be the propagandist of his reforms.

Chieftainship and Government

In 1921 the doctrine of Indirect Rule was formally pronounced the guiding principle of government in the Sudan.[1] In the Nuba Mountains

[1] See *Report of the Milner Commission*, 1921, section iiiD, p. 34: 'Having regard to [the] vast extent [of the Sudan] and the varied character of its inhabitants, the administration of its different parts should be left, as far as possible, in the hands of the native authorities, wherever they exist, under British supervision.'

(as in other backward areas of the Sudan) the precarious state of public security forbade an early adoption of this policy. But the Administration was ready to accept and use indigenous political institutions as soon as the pacification of the country would allow. The years 1928–35 saw the end of punitive expeditions and forced migrations, and the gradual devolution of the Direct Rule of police-posts and District Commissioners. It gave way to the 'indirect' government through tribal chiefs, invested with judicial and fiscal ('elementary fiscal') authority, who drew a Government salary and were given a small band of riflemen as tribal police.

In Indirect Rule an elementary expedient is expanded into a political creed by the vision of a native society changing and progressing. As a static principle, Indirect Rule means little more than the acceptance of a situation, so familiar in colonial conquests, in which a handful of Europeans, preparing to govern a vast native population, utilizes institutions and rulers found *in situ*. Yet once a changing society is envisaged, whose institutions and representatives are increasingly to share in the task of government, and whose ultimate future is to be one of self-rule, the colonial rule-of-thumb attains moral significance: it becomes a political programme, a promise, and a never-completed task.

In the Nuba Mountains this vision is still unreal, and belongs to the realm of a nebulous future. Indirect Rule is still, we might say, in the stage of the 'expedient'. But even so it embraces change—change of a fundamental because elementary nature. In the Nuba Mountains we are faced with problems of creation rather than of development. The indigenous political institutions, still largely in an embryonic stage, hardly possess the prerequisite elements for us to utilize or build upon. More specifically, few Nuba tribes offer an ancient system of chieftainship or some form of leadership which could be entrusted with the new political tasks. Paradoxically, administration proved easier in the tribes with no traditional form of government than in those which possessed chiefs and tribal leaders. The paradox is easily solved. In groups in which the whole system of government had to be newly created one could not but be aware of the completely new and unprecedented nature of this step: one was naturally careful to observe all necessary safeguards, and more modest in one's aims. The presence, in other tribes, of men who were called and presented as 'chiefs' tempted one to invest them with powers and charge them with tasks which, though typical of chieftainship in the abstract (or chieftainship as it is known in other parts of Africa), were little appropriate to the Nuba variety.

It was either the leadership of 'big men', impermanent and concerned mainly with military command, or the ambassadorship of the 'Chiefs of the Path'; here and there a sacred kingship existed, of limited temporal powers, and subject to ritual restrictions which precluded an energetic leadership in our sense. These men, then, had to be invested with an authority and responsibility without precedent in tribal life. Centralized control, itself unprecedented in most of these strongly segmented societies,

was rendered even more precarious when charged with the modern administrative duties of tax-collection, the recruiting of labour for public work, or the prosecution of offenders. When I selected candidates for the newly created panel of elders in Tullishi, the men, nominated by their own people, were reluctant to accept this position. The honour of the office did not blind them to the heavy and unpopular responsibilities which it entailed; they knew, from not always pleasant experience, the meaning of Government. Yet these first Government chiefs did not hesitate to accept their nomination. The position of a chief appeared undoubtedly more attractive than that of a mere elder. But above all, these first chiefs saw in their new office merely a logical continuation of the authority which they had held of old.

If it proved too weak for the new tasks, it could yet count on new support by the whole coercive machinery of government with which the Administration would back its chiefs. But it forms part of the policy of Native Administration to withdraw more and more such outside support. Indeed, it can only be used with discretion. If it were applied too liberally, it would lend to chieftainship an artificial, unassailable strength, which must break and silence all opposing forces. The possibility of opposition is vital to a healthy society, and twice as vital in changing societies like those with which we are dealing. Opposition and criticism, like a pressure gauge, show maladjustment, and indicate the concessions which will overcome it. Smash the pressure gauge, silence and drive underground all opposition, and the result must be an explosion—revolt or disruption.

Opposition to the established authority, though warranted by political philosophy, is none the less disturbing in practice, especially if you have to enforce alien laws and regulations, allowing of no concessions. Left to their own resources, the Nuba chiefs had themselves to strengthen their position. The more insecure it appeared, the more jealous they became of their authority. The new offence of 'contempt of court'—or contempt of the chiefly authority in general—often mentioned in this book, is the direct expression of this tendency; and the result, a never-stable balance between dictatorial leanings and disaffection.

Traditional leadership solved this dilemma in too crude a fashion to offer useful guidance. In most Nuba tribes this leadership rested on brute force. The right of the leaders of tribes or communities to intervene in public life (if this right was at all recognized) was assured by the large body of followers which they could muster. The enforcement of law and order was reduced to a contest of strength between opposing groups—the group on the side of the law and the group siding with the offender—while the large majority of the people was little better than the gallery before which this contest was played out. An obedience to law and ruler which springs from no deeper motive than a calculation of the chances of punishment yields no stable principle of government. That can emerge only where the authority of the ruler is

accepted as such, *prima facie*, and the obedience has the quality of obviousness and normality.

In most monarchic societies this quality flows from the twin source—hereditary succession, and a supernatural sanction behind the chiefly or royal authority. Only few forms of leadership in the Nuba tribes possess these attributes. The hereditary succession is mostly without such supernatural 'charter', it is incidental, following the inheritance of accumulated wealth, and thus potential power (e.g. in Korongo). If external causes frustrate the inheritance, or if the appearance of greater wealth and power elsewhere renders it ineffective, the vague claim to succession cannot be upheld. In one or two tribes we discovered a supernatural sanction of hereditary chieftainship which rested on its indirect association, through clan or kinship ties, with a priestly office: the chief is the 'brother' of the tribal priest (in Koalib), or chieftainship and priestship appear as parallel offices, vested in juxtaposed clans (in Dilling). This divided authority represents, I believe, an ideal solution. Needless to say, it cannot be reproduced artificially. In one tribe, Nyima, the paramount tribal leadership was itself of a sacred and priestly order. It is doubtful if a twin office of this kind can be successfully utilized in modern government. Its supernatural sanction is too strong: the belief that the chief-priest could plunge the whole country into disaster seems an excessive spur to civil obedience. What we said before of political opposition holds good here also. Some disobedience must always occur; it is not only inevitable, but also useful—an indication of pressure and maladjustment. This effect is nullified if offences are turned into sins, and disobedience is strangled by panic fear.

Nor is hereditary succession a panacea for the growing pains of modern chieftainship. The personality of the chief has acquired a new, and in a sense disproportionate, importance, since he must prove himself by gifts, moral and intellectual, which are still alien to the culture of which he is a product. Indeed, we demand a most one-sided heredity, pertaining only to the chief's right of succession, but not to the mental and moral mould of his forefathers or predecessors.

In the absence of hereditary succession, the factor of personality becomes paramount. The new standards by which it is assessed are already widely accepted. Not unnaturally, they emphasize tangible faculties rather than the imponderables of the human character. What counts, then, is a knowledge of Arabic and familiarity with the 'ways of the *Hakuma*'—such as, for example, ex-policemen must possess in admirable degree.

A religious sanction, hereditary succession, contrast chieftainship as a principle of government, abstract and continuous, with its transient embodiment in individuals. In Nuba chieftainship the abstract principle is largely overshadowed by the individuality of the chief. Office and office-holder are indistinguishable. The vital importance of this distinction is easy to see: without it, the evolution of the political authority cannot be conceived of as such; rather it appears as an accidental series

of forms of government, some better, some worse, but none possessed of an abstract, timeless *raison d'être*. Any failure of individual chiefs is indistinguishable from a failure of the whole system. Often one gains the impression that chieftainship itself is regarded merely as an accident, an institution which might vanish as inexorably as it appeared.

In some respects this is indeed the attitude of the Nuba tribes towards the Government. Yet here the abstract principle is not ignored. The people are well aware that behind the individual agents of the Government, behind *Mufettish*, *Mamur*, policeman or chief, there is a supreme, abstract entity—the *Hakuma*. In their speech they make constant reference to the *Hakuma* as to an impersonal power, inexorable, and extending beyond their orbit, like some law of creation. But it is neither timeless nor unique: one speaks of a 'first *Turkiya*' (the Turkish régime) and a 'second *Turkiya*' (the present Government);[1] one thinks it possible—and sometimes even likely—that, like the first, the second may disappear some day. The Government represents but an accident—a reality without justification, and many of its acts bear, to the people, the same stamp of accidental and inscrutable happenings. This conception is being gradually dispelled by the growing understanding of British rule. The people would speak spontaneously of its beneficial effects, which brought them peace, security, economic development, and these no longer doubtful benefits also warrant (though they might not always explain) the many other Government actions which still appear inscrutable or irrational to the Nuba mind.

To sum up. The weakness of modern Nuba chieftainship is due to both technical and spiritual factors: (1) to the inadequacy of its machinery of social control, and (2) to the inherent instability of a system of government which is devoid of abstract, timeless validity.

(1) The former can be overcome by anchoring chieftainship in the solid, permanent foundations of the social structure. To strengthen chieftainship without fostering autocratic rule or provoking its reaction, disaffection, means to link it with a system of political representation. It is an essential part of the scheme of Native Administration in the Nuba tribes that chiefs are to govern assisted by a council of sub-chiefs and tribal elders, who, in their double function of agents of the chief and mouthpiece of the tribe, should both support and check the authority of the chief. The indigenous leadership of 'big men' could admit no such constitutional check to its authority, save the crude, summary reactions of an open test of strength or a change of allegiance. Nor did we discover any institutionalized headship of smaller sections in the community, like clan or village heads. Again, then, these offices and the whole principle of political representation had to be newly created, without guidance from the tribal organization. At least, without direct

[1] When the war broke out many Nuba learned for the first time that more than one *Hakuma* existed in the world. This co-existence came as a great surprise to them, though a succession of governments is fully understood.

guidance; for the social system of the tribes can teach us how and on what foundations to build the new political structure so that it should do justice to the dominant group interests and to the effective segments of the society. It is in this respect that the efforts of the Administration have partly failed. Sub-chiefs and elders were uniformly selected on the basis of locality. But only in one or two tribes does locality represent a significant principle of segmentation (e.g. in Otoro or Moro). More often it corresponds to an incidental, impermanent grouping, while the clan represents the significant segment in the society. We have, in fact, seen that certain tribes are utilizing the clan structure for such administrative tasks as tax-collection (Tira, Nyima), though it is done tacitly, without the full recognition (and sometimes knowledge) of the Administration. A limited and tacit recognition of this kind is not enough: if it is to utilize successfully the motives which determine concerted action in these segments and the loyalties which hold them together, it must be fully conscious, as they are.

(2) Still our task is incomplete while chieftainship retains its accidental and impermanent character. Its nature cannot be changed by mere administrative reforms. The change will evolve gradually, if and when chieftainship will come to be regarded as the focus of political existence, and its acts of government as expressions of this existence—that is, as efforts through which the society affirms and maintains itself. Societies affirm and maintain themselves, above all, through their laws. Chieftainship and law must then become reflections of each other, the chief the agent of a law that is greater and more necessary than he, and his actions the fulfilment of this necessity. But the law in the Nuba tribes is only now shaping, in the mould of cultural change, and has yet to gain this meaning of a supreme necessity, through an acceptance which is both universal and self-evident. Law and chieftainship will thus attain their ulterior validity together, in a process of which only the first phases are as yet visible.

Before we turn to the analysis of Nuba law—the final problem of this book—I must make this admission: our interpretation of the political future of the Nuba tribes admits of exceptions; the remodelling of the tribal political system, guided by anthropological findings, may not be practical policy: it may come too late. In some tribes one generation of modern administration was sufficient to cause the Government-sponsored chieftainship and sub-chieftainship to be accepted so completely that no departure from this system is now conceivable, artificial though it is. Heiban and Laro are typical cases. Certain political frictions and minor maladjustments exist also in these tribes. They supplied me with a motive to discuss with the people the pros and cons of the existing system of administration and of the clan representation as I conceived it. Though my informants were conscientious (and polite) enough to admit the merits of my scheme, they rejected it finally. Their objections were summed up in one sentence: 'Our young men would never obey clan or family heads in

political matters; they obey only the *Meks* and *Sheikhs* which the *Hakuma* has appointed.' Unhappily for the anthropologist, then, the scientifically sounder organization may prove impracticable, and indeed unnecessary.

Yet this admission does not affect the validity of our deductions; rather, it confirms it. The quick readjustment of these groups is explained by their smallness as well as their weakly pronounced internal structure and coherence. There was nothing in their social system that would oppose the alien political organization, either materially or morally. The new organization could not but bear down on them with overwhelming strength, and rapidly engulf them. Anthropological guidance in the political reorganization of these tribes is ruled out, not because it would be less efficient, but because it was less timely. For anthropological guidance in the political field is essentially an alternative to rule upheld by power (of whatever nature).

Introduction to Primitive Law

We have, throughout this book, stressed the interdependence of law and political institutions. They are two sides of the same coin. Existence as a political unit is inseparable from the acceptance of a common system of law. For the essence of political existence is the territorial organization for war without, and peace within. The political unit maintains its integrity both through concerted forceful action against other, similarly organized groups, and through an internal conformity of conduct which excludes, or brands as 'illegal', all use of force between the members of the group. Both law and political institutions direct and canalize the use of force: against groups and individuals who, placed outside the geographical borders of the society, are also outside its peace and law; and against individuals who, having transgressed the rules of conduct valid in the society, have placed themselves outside the law. The law is maintained by the political machinery—that is, a machinery of force and compulsion. One use of force (the disruptive, criminal use of force by the transgressor) is sanctioned by another (the legitimate, 'corrective' use of force by the society and its agents).

Jurists will not quarrel with this identification of law and political system.[1] But anthropologists might argue its inapplicability to primitive societies. To omit, in the definition of law, its association with the political machinery is to render it indistinguishable from a closely related body of rules and commands—custom. Both are concerned with maintaining institutions and ensuring conformity of conduct: but while the law enforces the uniformity by the commands, and through the punitive actions, of the political authority, custom attains it by sanctions of a more diffuse and less tangible nature. It is precisely this distinction which proves difficult to harmonize with anthropological data. It is easily enough established in advanced societies, in which the political authority

[1] Cp. Salmond, *On Jurisdiction*, 8th ed., 1930, p. 116: the administration of justice is 'the maintenance of right within the political community by means of the physical force of the State'.

is centralized and invested in a special body of men, and thus conspicuously defined. But the distinction between law and custom seems to have no place in primitive societies like the Nuba tribes, which have no tangible system of government, and in which offences provoke, not some authoritative action, but the spontaneous self-help of individuals or group sections.

To remain faithful to the political definition of law would mean, in these primitive societies, to deny the significance of 'law' to the machinery with which these groups enforce rules of conduct and sanction offences, and relegate it wholly to 'custom'. From this narrow, if logical, theory of primitive law it would follow that many primitive societies have only custom, and no law. This rigid alternative must be modified. For within 'custom' a distinction analogous to that between custom and law reappears. Some rules of conduct are upheld merely by tradition—think of the rules of exogamy in many Nuba tribes: while others are enforced by sanctions and punitive measures. Though these sanctions are not ordered or executed by an authoritative body, though they still represent self-help, they are morally supported by the community and even pressed upon individuals or group sections by expressions of public approval or disapproval. We have spoken of the eating avoidances and other forms of veiled and conventional ostracism by means of which revenge is enforced or a culprit driven to a self-chosen punishment—exile.

Another theory of primitive law, set forth by Professor Malinowski, in fact holds that where 'effective social constraint' exists, law exists.[1] Yet again a certain modification is necessary. For the forms of social constraint are not all of the same nature and logical order, and the division between law and custom also obtains within this widest field of law. It is clearly a different form of constraint which is implied, say, in the contempt shown for an Otoro widow who disregards the rules of levirate, and in the public approval of a duel between husband and paramour. This difference can be formulated on the basis of our conception of the 'corrective' use of force. It need not, as we have seen, flow from a well-defined central authority: it need entail only the authority of public consent. Where the social constraint implies this 'corrective' use of force we speak of law; where force is absent from the sanction, we have custom.[2]

The concept of 'force' needs itself explanation. It can be interpreted only in terms of a particular society and its institutions: what appears as brutal force in one society may be a normal, 'legal', act elsewhere. Take the marriage by capture in Heiban; or the threats with which the young men of Korongo and Mesakin can, on coming of age, compel their mother-brothers to allow them the customary gift of cattle; or the right of the *genadi* of Dilling to confiscate first-fruits reaped in the close

[1] B. Malinowski, *Crime and Custom in Savage Society*, 1936, p. 32.

[2] Professor Radcliffe-Brown holds that 'in collective actions . . . in which it may be said that the community judges and the community inflicts punishment, we may see the embryonic form of criminal law' (*African Political Systems*, Oxford University Press, 1940, p. xv.). He would, I think agree, that his formula may be taken to embrace also our definition.

season: legitimate rights in these tribes, they would be a violation of rights in others. In every society individuals and group sections have certain physical, economic, and social rights, which materialize in the social relations with other individuals or group sections. 'Force', then, is defined as any behaviour which runs counter to these accepted (as it were, 'constitutional') rights of individuals or groups.[1] Any spontaneous and unwarranted violation we call crimes, offences, or a 'criminal' use of force; and any infringement which is backed by public consent, a sanction or a 'corrective' use of force.

It is clear that there must be borderline cases in which the distinction between custom and law is blurred. The public contempt shown to a widow who spurns the law of levirate, and the ostracism which may drive a murderer into exile, differ in degree only. The latter is clearly a severe encroachment on the social rights of individuals, since it excludes them from religious ceremonies, tribal festivities, in short, from all share in the institutionalized communal life. But the widow who is in disgrace because of her unorthodox conduct is, on a smaller scale, equally deprived of this normal right of individuals to be included in institutionalized social intercourse: she would be unable to visit her kinsfolk, and would not be asked to kinship feasts or ceremonies.

The difference in degree between custom and law pervades the law itself. It is a truism to say that crimes are more and less grave, and that they are sanctioned accordingly by penalties of graded severity. This scale of severity expresses the moral evaluation accepted in the society. What, then, are the foundations of this moral classification?

At first sight it seems based on the *quality* of the offence or crime—that is, on the evaluation of the rights which are invaded by the offence—economic, physical, or social. Theft, the violation of the rights of property, is 'bad'; but attacks on human life are worse—'God is angry', say the Tira. In our description of Nuba law we adopted, mainly for practical reasons, this 'qualitative' classification of offences and crimes. We enumerated them under the headings: property offences, matrimonial offences, homicide, magic and witchcraft. But behind this qualitative distinction, and cutting across it, we perceived another category of classification, which equally expressed degrees of severity. The evaluation of adultery and homicide, for example, and the sanctions which these crimes would provoke, vary according to whether they are committed in the clan or outside it, in or outside the political unit. We propose to call this new category the *social range* of offences.

The qualitative evaluation of crimes and offences can itself be reduced to such differences in social range. In the legal system of the Nuba tribes, theft, a lighter crime, is conceived of as concerning only individuals; redress is authorized, but not enjoined, by the society; the individuals

[1] A right is 'a capacity residing in one man of controlling with the assent and assistance of the State (for 'State' substitute, in our case, 'society') the actions of another' (Holland, quoted in W. R. Anson, *The Law and Custom of the Constitution*, i, p. 2).

concerned may or may not take action, they may or may not be assisted by friends and relations in their attempts to recover their property. But homicide is the gravest crime because it attacks the integrity of the whole community; the whole community also takes action, indirectly, through those avoidances which act as spurs to blood feud and revenge.

The distinction of degrees of severity in breaches of the law is familiar to us from our own society. We speak of offences and crimes, and of civil as against criminal law. This distinction has undergone too many changes in the course of history and is too conventionalized to allow of any but a very fluid definition. The only definition which is both logical and general is derived from the concept of 'social range'. Civil law embraces offences which affect primarily the rights of individuals; the society, through its judicial machinery, acts only where individuals take the initiative, and follows the general maxim, 'no plaintiff, no cause'. Criminal law deals with crimes attacking the interests of the society at large: its judicial machinery is brought into action spontaneously, the State—the society—claiming itself the initiative.[1]

The present Government imposed a somewhat similar distinction upon the traditional legal system of the Nuba tribes in arrogating to itself the right of taking legal action in severe crimes (like homicide), but leaving minor crimes and offences to the initiative and discretion of the tribal courts. In the traditional legal system this simple dual division could not exist—for two reasons. First, the juxtaposition of individual and State has no counterpart in these societies. Rather, we find a series of social units, of progressively widening range, whose integrity is attacked by offences or crimes—individual, kinship group, clan and sub-clan, community, tribe. Secondly, since the sanctions do not flow from a special authority, the legal initiative lies invariably with the individuals or groups directly affected by the wrong. Categories akin to those of civil and criminal law, however, emerge from the distinction between retaliatory actions which are left to the discretion of those who suffered the tort, and retaliatory actions carried out under social compulsion (e.g. the threat of ostracism).

Three meanings thus appear interlocked in the concept of 'social range': it refers (1) to the social units between which (or within which) the wrong is committed; (2) to the social unit whose integrity is violated;

[1] Jurists speak in this sense of 'private wrongs' and 'public wrongs'. Austin lays down: 'Where the wrong is a civil injury, the sanction is enforced at the discretion of the party whose right has been violated. Where the wrong is a crime, the sanction is enforced at the discretion of the sovereign' (*Lectures on Jurisprudence*, 3rd ed., 518). I am aware that this distinction has been rejected by other authorities, and replaced by a definition based on the conventions of legal sanctions. Civil law, in their view, deals with the enforcement of rights (i.e. with wrongs which admit of restitution), criminal law with the punishment of wrongs (*see* Salmond, op. cit., p. 118). Its very concern with the conventions of the law makes this definition unacceptable to us. In Nuba law, the sanction even of the gravest offence, homicide, still takes the form of 'restitution', as which blood revenge is regarded. If we accepted this definition, we should have to admit, against the meaning of the tribal law, the absence of crimes and criminal law in these primitive societies.

and (3) to the social unit charged with the retaliatory action—that is, to the scope of collective responsibility. These three aspects do not invariably coincide. We find that theft or adultery between members of different clans is considered the concern of individuals only, not of the clans. Homicide between clans or sub-clans is conceived of as an attack upon the integrity both of these segments and of the embracing, widest social unit. This widest social unit leaves all direct retaliatory action to its segments; but again, it is frequently, not the clan, but a still narrower unit, the kinship group, which must shoulder the collective responsibility of revenge.

The third aspect, finally, does not materialize at all in wrongs committed within the group segments, kinship group and clan. We remember the existence of the unpunishable clan and kinship crimes, which entail no sanction, or no secular sanction. The explanation lies in the principle of self-help, on which Nuba law is founded. Incest, or adultery between members of the same clan, are evil acts, deserving of punishment: but the groups within which they are committed are too closely knit, possessed of too strong a collective identity, to permit the use of (corrective) force between its own members or sections. Though their integrity is violated by the crime, such sanctions would violate it in even greater measure. Thus punishment is left to imaginary, supernatural agencies, or excluded altogether. I have, in previous chapters, stressed the abhorrent nature of these crimes, which places them beyond human penalties. The present and previous interpretation refer to two aspects of an identical attitude; for the same close integration which makes any violation of group unity—that is, any violation of the rules of conduct which constitute this unity, appear as a crime beyond the realm of human sanction, also forbids the application of 'corrective force'.

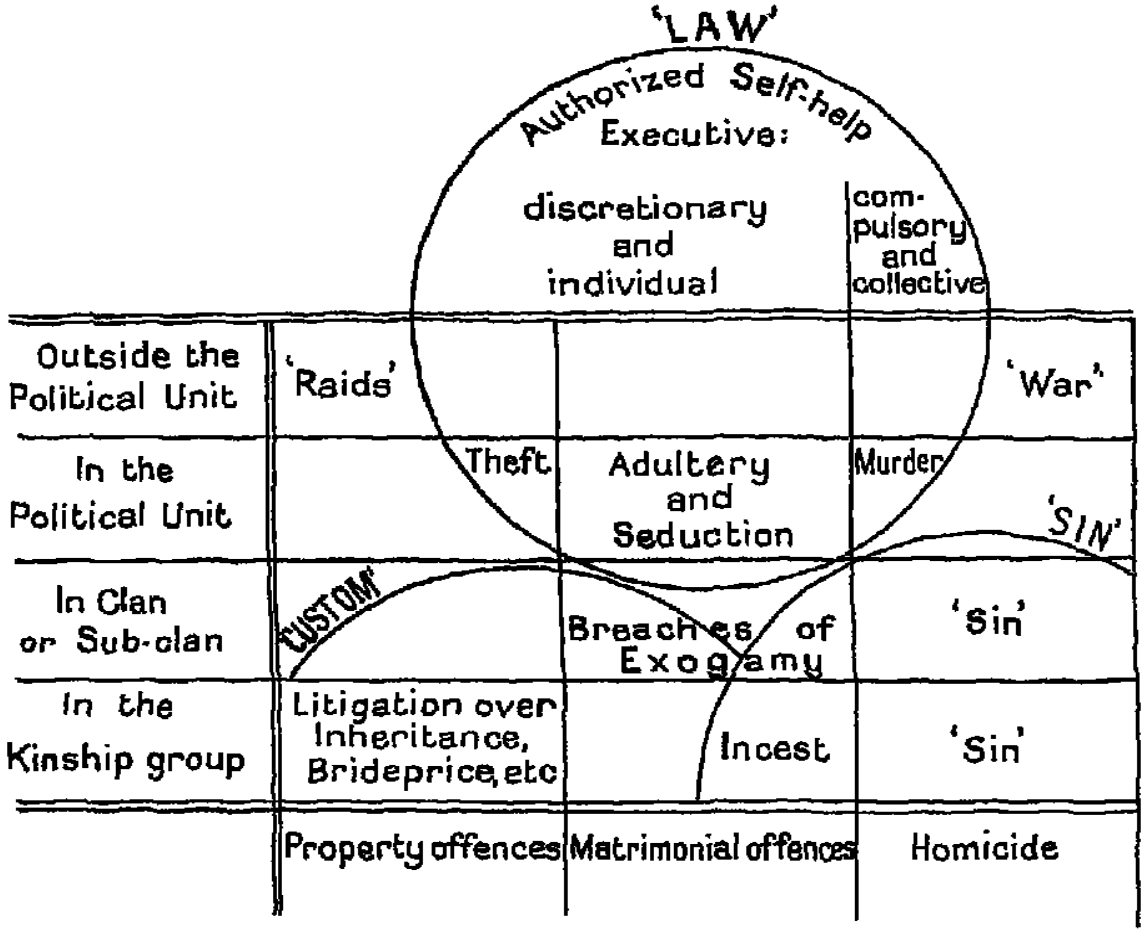
It is said that Solon's code laid down no punishment of patricide, as a crime too horrid even to contemplate. The attitude towards incest in many Nuba groups is of this nature. Here, then, our distinction of law and custom, which hinges on the principle of sanction, admits of exceptions: to our list of offences and crimes, we have to add sins. Yet we remember also that human sanctions enter indirectly. The repulsion felt for such crimes and their perpetrators may isolate them among their people, drive them from home and community, and bar them, in the manner of legal sanctions, from the fundamental rights of ordinary man.

Let me make this intricate interplay of many factors clearer by projecting it on a diagram. The qualitative classification of wrongs, and their social range (i.e. the groups within which they are committed) constitute two co-ordinates. Combined, they define the place of wrongs on the scale of severity, and thus in the framework of the law and its sanctions. We see that enforcement in the legal sense applies only to offences outside (and between) the single clans or sub-clans, i.e. on the level of that widest group which we have defined as the political unit; below it, we have either breaches of 'custom', or 'sins' (the two categories overlap

in exogamy, which, in some groups, entails no sanction); above it, a use of force (in 'raids' or 'war'), which is beyond the orbit of the law, and thus legitimate.

The Future of Nuba Law

None of the categories with which we were operating, custom and law, offences, crimes, and sins, is either rigid or static. In the course of history custom often changes into law, or law is degraded to custom; offences become crimes as morality changes, and the significance of crimes is weakened to that of offences. Moreover, entirely new rules



of conduct, endowed with the validity of laws, are frequently introduced as social systems evolve or are subjected to outside influences.

Such changes were not absent in the traditional law of the Nuba tribes (though much of its evolution is no longer traceable). We discovered them entailed in the growth of chieftainship—in Otoro, for example, where the custom of compensation (*nmar*) in homicide cases grew into tribal law, backed by the authority of the chief (*see* p. 154). They were visible also in the attempts of many tribes to extend the orbit of the law over wider and wider groups. We may disregard these few, gradual changes in the present context. An infinitely greater and more sudden readjustment followed the establishment of British rule. The traditional norms of conduct, custom, law, and the dogma of sin, are

all now called in question. Partly the borderlines between them are already redrawn; partly it falls to us to re-define them. For we must decide what customs to adopt, as laws, into the new legal system which we are building up, and what ancient 'laws' to ignore, and thus to relegate to the position of customs. We must decide, too, whether 'sins' shall be brought within the orbit of the law or left with their mystic and supernatural connotation; and how, finally, the modern law shall be reconciled with a moral code based on the evaluation of the 'social range' of crimes and offences.

These are the two angles from which we propose to approach our problem: first, the changes which the conception of the 'social range' must undergo; and, secondly, the re-definition of the three norms of conduct—custom, law, sin.

(1) We have immensely widened the orbit of the law. It now embraces the country as a whole, and law and order no longer stop at the boundaries of the old political unit. The new domain in which the law must run also absorbs and obviates the categories of 'social range' which used to divide the political unit. Whether wrongs are committed in the kinship group or clan, or outside these units, can no longer matter: they are all equally the concern of the supreme political authority—the Government. Nor have the individuals and groups primarily affected by a wrong the right to effect themselves redress and retaliation; and the local Native Authorities, which are now charged with this task, act on behalf, not only of these individuals and groups, but of that supreme and impersonal guarantor of law and order as well.

The extension of the orbit of the law over the domains of clan and kinship group has worked with surprising smoothness. The situation is still in flux, but is slowly crystallizing. More and more cases of incest and similar offences, or cases of homicide committed in these ancient enclaves of tribal law, are being submitted to the Native Courts. Both 'sins' and breaches of custom are being accepted as offences in the legal sense. We remember the example of Nyima and Dilling, where matrimonial offences of an incestuous nature, or involving the infringement of exogamous rules, are now treated as adultery of a particularly severe kind.

The extension of the law beyond the old political units has not been as smooth. It is clearly difficult for these tribes, whose ideas of manhood are bound up with warfare and raids, to adjust themselves to the new code of morality, which bans once legitimate and laudable pursuits as punishable offences. Why one extension of the law should appear so easy, and the other so hard, is not difficult to see. The acceptance of secular punishment in clan and kinship crimes leaves the rules of conduct as such unchanged. But in being ordered to renounce raids and wars on other communities the people are asked to call a right a wrong; indeed, they are made to deny a right which was rooted in the very foundations of their political existence.

The disappearance of self-help means similarly a reversal of traditional ethics and the surrender of a fundamental ('constitutional') right. In nearly every tribe I was assured that the people fully appreciated the elimination of the former contest of strength, whose issue was always uncertain, and often unjust. Yet in many groups the assumption of retaliation by an impersonal, often unknown, authority became a deeply felt grievance. Often, therefore, revenge flares up regardless of the fact that the culprit had been brought to justice. We have mentioned an interesting compromise adopted by the Korongo courts in adultery cases: a husband who catches his wife's paramour *in flagrante delicto* will be excused if he attacks him then and there; if he missed his chance, his claims to self-help lapse. No such compromise is clearly possible in homicide; moreover, in this crime, in which the duty of revenge (a collective duty) was laid down with great precision, the moral readjustment must be more difficult. We have seen that many secondary elements of the blood feud still survive, divorced from the dominant element, the revenge itself, such as the conventional flight of the culprit's kin, or the rituals of expiation between the families of homicide and victim. They were, formerly, part and parcel of the law of homicide; unrecognized by us, they have become custom—though a custom which still competes with the law. In tribes which used to accept blood money this difficulty is less pronounced; for the exchange of blood money has been incorporated in the legal practice, and the group primarily affected by the crime is thus recognized as having special claims of redress, over and above the claims of the Government to punish the offender. Attempts, however, made here and there to introduce blood money in tribes in which it did not previously exist, in order to buy off the claim to blood revenge, have invariably failed.

The collective responsibility in revenge applied to the group of the culprit as well as of the victim. The old law of 'blood for blood' did not, as we remember, specify the person whose life should be taken, but embraced the whole kinship group (or all the kinsmen of a certain relationship), or even the whole clan of the murderer. If it still happens that the kinship group or clan of the offender refuses to surrender him to legal punishment, it is due to the tenacity of this conception. The offender himself is, to the people, no more guilty and deserving of punishment than any of his relations: to give him up means to deny the part which chance would play in guiding the revenge; it means, too, forgoing a legitimate escape from revenge, which was open, in the past, to an offender and his family who were prepared to brave the social disabilities entailed in an undecided blood feud or, in the last resort, to seek safety in exile. Above all, the people are reluctant to concede the right of revenge, which would come logically from the kinship group or clan which suffered the loss, to the impersonal, aloof agency of the chief and the Government he represents.

The resistance may be so strong, the belief in its justification so deeply

rooted, that the surrender of the culprit could only be achieved by most severe police measures, and these may be ruled out by general considerations of policy. In a case of this kind I have suggested that the Government should itself make use of the collective responsibility and the traditional weapon of ostracism. The culprit should be declared an outlaw by his own group (which he would already be, in practice, through the fear of capture and revenge, and the various avoidances involved in blood feud), and barred from his home and country. The severity of this punishment, as well as its justice (in the eyes of the people,) is beyond doubt: but the punishment represents admittedly a retrogression. For in adopting it we should be legalizing a usage which the evolution of modern law would banish into the sphere of custom.

The persistence of the idea of collective responsibility also presents a problem of civil law: to what extent should the relations of an offender be held responsible if he is unable (or unwilling) to make good the loss which he caused to others? Generally speaking, the trend of modern law must be to narrow down legal responsibility to the culprit himself, except in the case of young people who are not yet regarded as full adults and have no property. We have seen that, in cases of theft, different tribes have solved this problem in different fashion: some permit, others exclude, this vicarious reparation. In litigations over bride-price, on the other hand, the responsibility of the family must always be admitted; for this collective concern is essential to the whole conception of bride-price claims and transactions.

The disappearance of self-help meant the disappearance also of the conspicuous reconciliation of plaintiff and defendant, which lay in the cessation of hostilities. It is in the nature of things that the impartial judgements of courts often leave some rancour and dissatisfaction. Though this cannot be prevented, the finality of the settlement can be given stronger expression: we could introduce the practice of a formal reconciliation, to seal the acceptance of the judgement. I am thinking of some symbolic act like a common sacrifice and meal of plaintiff and defendant, or an oath to keep the peace, or even a handshake in front of court and witnesses. I have shown that in some tribes such rites are practised, or have been retained, especially in homicide cases or disputes which harbour the danger of renewed hostilities. They should, I believe, be legalized and extended to all disputes, the formality of reconciliation corresponding to the severity of the offence.

(2) The number of traditional 'laws' is so small and so closely restricted to actions which must appear, to-day no less than in the past, as offences and crimes that the question of omitting some of them from the new code of law hardly arises. The transformation of customs into laws, on the other hand, is of a more controversial nature. The trend in the Nuba tribes is towards treating all social customs (customs bearing on social relationship) as legitimate, enforceable laws: exogamous rules have found a place in the new matrimonial law, and disputes over bride-price

or inheritance, even over the customary, half obligatory, gifts between friends and relations, are all now causes for law suits. This is true also of petty quarrels, or offences against rules of kinship etiquette, such as the lack of respect towards a father-in-law (*see* p. 427). This promotion *in toto* of customs and their weaker version, manners, to the dignity of 'laws' should not be encouraged. Many of these disagreements, specially those which do not involve a question of restitution, could be settled out of court, in the family or kinship group. Not only would they encumber the courts, but they would also burden them with the most thankless and (to a young judicature) discouraging task—to effect a settlement where there may be nothing to settle save outraged feelings, and to assess the rights and wrongs in issues which have too little weight in social life and are of too fluid and personal a nature ever to have been conceived of in terms of crime and punishment, or tort and redress. Nor indeed should they be so conceived. No law can be allowed to become all-embracing, lest it defeat itself. Some latitude in unorthodox conduct must be permitted; there must exist a domain of social relationship in which the disregard of conformity is deprecated as shameful, ill-advised, odd, or silly, without bringing down the heavy machinery of public punishment. Far be it from us to foster legal totalitarianism.

Such totalitarian concept is not wholly alien to these primitive societies. We have met with tribes in which the threat of sanctions pervades nearly every field of human conduct. But the rules of conduct which are so sanctioned have a magic connotation (*tabus*, ritual avoidances); occasionally they admit of penalties, administered by priests; more often, the sanction is purely supernatural and imaginary, and credited with an almost automatic effectiveness. It goes beyond the scope of this book to explore this conception of an all-embracing moral universe and the obsession with fear and sin which it creates. We will only state that very few attempts have been made to bring these mystic offences within the framework of modern jurisdiction. They occur only where these offences entail priest-imposed penalties, and in societies whose political system is itself weighted with mystic and sacred features (e.g. the attempt of the Dilling people to turn seasonal food avoidances into offences punishable by the political authority: *see* p. 473). Mostly sin remains sin, and offence offence, and the mystic rules are left to exist side by side with the secular laws (overlapping only in the 'unpunishable' clan and kinship crimes).

Yet Nuba law, like all systems of law, must, in the last resort, recognize this imaginary moral universe, with its quasi-automatic magic penalties, in the form of oaths and ordeals. A related mystic sanction, moreover, may appear as an actionable offence in the modern sense—witchcraft and similar deadly magic. I call witchcraft a 'sanction' because it is conceived of in all Nuba tribes as a magic retaliation, threatening evil-doers. But it is a non-specific retaliation, which is provoked by any kind of wrong; it is traced back, not to an impersonal, almost mechanical

agency, but to concrete individuals; and the weight of its punishment is often disproportionate (at least when weighed against the now accepted penalties) with the offence which it is alleged to punish. These three factors explain the resort to law against what are, to the people themselves, acts of mystic justice. This view, however, is not yet fully accepted or realized, and magic and witchcraft are still often met with counter-magic only: they call for protection, not complaint.

How far, we must ask ourselves, should the modern system of jurisdiction recognize, or even utilize, these magic beliefs? Oaths and, in some measure, ordeals must be recognized: no system of law can do entirely without this extension of its all too limited realm of rational evidence.[1] It is, of course, the psychological, not the mystic, effect that counts with us—the readiness of witnesses or accused to face the punishment which they expect to descend on a perjurer or culprit. Already the oath on magic paraphernalia and the few ordeals which are known in the Nuba tribes are giving way to the more respectable oath on the Arab *kitab*, which may calm the conscience of legal or moral purists. But the Koran is used in no other sense—it remains an instrument of a quasi-automatic, mystic sanction.

The judgements of the Native Courts in witchcraft cases, on the other hand, should not, I feel, be endorsed by the Government officer. This might seem a surprising view for an anthropologist. It is based on no moral scruples or vague hopes of enlightenment; rather is it guided by the thought of the future of law and jurisdiction in these primitive societies. This future is bound up with the possibility of building up knowledge and appreciation of rational evidence; if we admit these paradigms of irrational crime, witchcraft, evil magic, we belie what must be the ultimate goal of our efforts. Naturally, we must go warily. At first, the role of the Government need only be a negative one: witchcraft accusations which the Native Courts settle in their own narrow jurisdiction, and *nemine contradicente*, could be well left alone. But in cases in which appeal is made to the Administrative officer, or in which his approval is necessary, he should insist on a re-trial. Such an attitude of the Government is bound to influence, in due course, the views of the tribal courts also. Two considerations will show that this suggestion is workable. First, if it can be established by normal, rational evidence that a certain individual has performed an act believed to represent evil magic, this act would as such (disregarding the question of its alleged physical effects[2]) fall under the law, as an 'act committed with the intention of inflicting grievous harm'. This suggestion represents, admittedly, a compromise, necessary so long as general enlightenment, through education, has not weakened the persuasiveness of magic beliefs. Secondly, since the belief in magic and witchcraft in the Nuba tribes is born of the fear of

[1] The ordeals practised by the Nuba tribes are few, as we have seen, and harmless, in the sense that their mechanism as such does not cause any bodily harm and thus apportion at once guilt and penalty. Ordeals of that severe type could not be included in the *carte blanche* which I suggest.

[2] They may often be real enough, caused by auto-suggestion and hysterical fear.

some, in itself, just retaliation, a rational nucleus will nearly always be discovered in the irrational accusation. Instead of 'witchcraft', we should be dealing, for example, with such tangible offences as perjury (*see* p. 258); or we might be able to dispose of a grievance and bring to justice an unexpiated crime, and thus to remove, with the cause, the fear of the mystic revenge.

We turn to a final relation between custom and law, materializing where customs have been forbidden or modified by the Administration for reasons of security or from general human and economic considerations. One instance is the prohibition of marriage by capture in Heiban; another the reduction, by the order of the Government, of the bride-price in Nyima. I have pointed out in previous chapters the difficulties created by such interference with traditional institutions, specially if their social significance is not fully realized. But I have also shown that not infrequently the people themselves request official intervention where they feel that social or economic changes warrant a change in custom (e.g. bride-price, or divorce rules). Normally, cultural changes of this kind would, in the course of time, produce the necessary readjustment in custom: but the presence of a Government which has assumed control over so many departments of public life makes it seem reasonable that the people should turn to it also in these difficulties, to give effect to changes of custom, at once prompter and more authoritative than those emerging in gradual evolution. This is only another aspect of the tendency to turn all customs into law; even recent and as yet unformed customs, then, are submitted to this supreme confirmation.

The danger is obvious: it lies in the premature codification of what is still, by its very nature, a tentative adjustment. The divorce law of Dilling, which I discussed in detail on p. 435, is a case in point.

Yet a codification must come. The very continuity of the law demands it. New causes of dispute, constantly emerging, and the many complications arising from modern social and economic life, make it necessary that the legal situation should be clarified and its principles formulated. This formulation should, in my view, take the form of a case law, growing gradually from the collection of significant law cases and decisions. Even so, all rigidity must be avoided. The law must have full scope to grow and change with the society and its conditions of existence. I can visualize one means of achieving this: a periodically repeated anthropological investigation of the society and its legal code. The anthropologist would act as a recorder of tribal law, checking precedents and revising the question of their retention in the body of case law, thus securing the continued harmony of law and social development.

The relationship of law and morality, always intricate, becomes even more so in changing societies. Law and morality reflect, support, and mould each other. But they also flow from different sources—law from political dictates, morality, more obscurely, from the wider social and

economic interests. The two norms of conduct do not, or need not, coincide at any given moment. Morality is the more deeply rooted of the two: it is more self-evident, and also more inert, but no law can survive for long entirely divorced from the support of morality. What I have said on a previous occasion of political control is true also of the law—that it demands a deeper foundation than fear of sanctions can give: an obedience which has attained the quality of normal and self-evident conduct.

Morality and its mouthpiece, public opinion, do not exist *in vacuo*. Morality is carried by the social institutions; it is confirmed by every traditional procedure and demonstrated, implicitly, by every religious ceremony. It is demonstrated more specifically by the various organizations of adolescence, and impressed upon the growing generation by the example and the teaching of their elders. In the Nuba tribes, these institutions and organizations still uphold many moral values which must now be overruled. We might argue that the tribal elders, whom we have entrusted with the tasks of Government and judicial control, will also defend and propagate the new morality. However, modern changes—economic changes especially—have weakened the authority of the older generation in the family and social life in general. As fathers no longer pay bride-price for their sons, so their influence over them is declining; and as sons bring back new habits, interests, and desires from the distant places where they worked as labourers or soldiers, so they withdraw from paternal control. We cannot beckon 'progress' with one hand and thrust it back with the other.

To break this vicious circle is the task of education rather than jurisdiction—education in the widest sense of the word. Education and jurisdiction can work together. I was greatly struck by the manner in which the chiefs of the Dilling and Nyima federations impressed upon the litigants who appeared before them the moral aspect of offences, the ethical, besides the legal, viewpoint. Their example, I think, well deserves to be emulated. Naturally, the main weight of education must be brought to bear on the young. School education is, so far, the only medium. Education in the elements of science will help, more than any laws or severe sanctions, to remove superstitious fears and beliefs in evil magic. The contacts established in schools between different tribes and communities will help to overcome the ancient barriers of ignorance and mutual ill-will.

It has been rightly emphasized that all education of primitive races must be moral education as well. How far the present scheme of school education in the Nuba Mountains does justice to this task I will not discuss. I will stress one point only. Moral education is nearly always identified with religious education, which means, in the Sudan, either Islamic or—in pagan areas—Christian education. But this is not the only, nor yet the best, solution. Often religious education leads to a blind, superficial adoption of the forms of religion rather than of its ethical

essence. It contains, too, so many elements which clash with the life as these tribes know it, and will ever know it, that their beneficial effects must appear dubious. Indeed, Islam as taught by narrow-minded zealots, and Christianity as taught by many missions, clash as much with the life as we, in the enlightened West, know it, and with the fruits of our long evolution which we now desire to share with the backward races of the world.[1]

The social and political changes which we envisage are in the nature of a gradual growth. But religious education uproots first, and rebuilds afterwards. Christianity, even more than Islam, plans to build a new society, not to help the old towards a smoother readjustment. The conflict with Islam is less sharp because Islam is a more plastic creed; in the form in which it has been embraced by African races it remains near the indigenous mode of life. Yet it divides the tribal society in the hostile camps of the converted and the unbelievers. Christianity—the rigid, orthodox persuasion of missions—is an uncompromisingly alien creed. It cannot be satisfied with underlining the universal moral tenets—the evilness of murder, respect for property or marital rights. It ignores traditional marital rights in preaching monogamy; it breaks up the family system; it bans dances as bad, or beer-drinking as immoral, and thus denies vital features of social integration. It aims at changes so radical that they demand themselves the protection of *ad hoc* created laws rather than lend strength to a slowly emerging new morality.

It will be understood that this discussion is concerned, not with the value of religious and mission education as such, but with its value for the political and social evolution of the Nuba tribes. If one holds that positive religion and Christianity are of supreme and absolute importance, one will justly consider all the difficulties which we outlined unavoidable—obstacles on a road which must be taken. If not, one will share the view which I have attempted to defend—namely, that ethical education without the elements of positive religion is possible. Let us not forget that we ourselves derive our moral education as much from the models of history, from the descriptions of the lives of great men (real or imaginary, heroes or saints), as from the formal rules of religion. The education of the Nuba, as of all primitive groups, should be guided thus: let moral education take the form of a teaching of tribal history, modified and weighted in accordance with modern moral values. The principle tenets of social morality as we visualize them, and as they are embodied in tribal structure and the tribal past, are often the same; only their terms of reference, the social range to which they refer, need reinterpretation. Let me make this clear by an example. Traditional Nuba morality is bounded by the small community: we want it to embrace the whole tribe, the whole country. Why not teach just that? The history of some tribes shows the extension of social morality from

[1] Thus Professor Huxley on missions in *Africa View* (p. 336): 'I wonder if people of this stamp realize that their ideas seem exactly as barbaric, crude, and wrong to a considerable and influential section of civilized people as do to them the ideas of the primitive tribes among whom they are working.'

the single hill community over the whole tribe; it shows the gradual disappearance of revenge and self-help; the recognition of an all-embracing orbit of the law. It should be easy to demonstrate the moral of this.[1]

Islam would teach the unity of all who embrace the faith and contempt for all others: its unity is that of a nascent nationalism. Christianity teaches the brotherhood of mankind—a faith too easily belied by reality. It is—who can deny it?—the more lofty creed. Is it a faint heart that would suggest it may be too lofty?

[1] One may argue that a non-religious moral education would forfeit its very persuasiveness, which lies in the mystic appeal of religious teaching. We know too little about these psychological problems to speak with any certainty. But even assuming that this argument is sound, we could point out that history—tribal history—tends to surround itself with the same mystic and sacred elements. The story of the growth of Otoro chieftainship, already a myth, or the legends about the Nyima rain-maker, are convincing examples.

APPENDIX I

POPULATION STATISTICS

THE lack of statistical data forbids any definite statement on the population movement in the Nuba Mountains. A small-scale survey of birth-rate and infant mortality which I have compiled in Heiban, Otoro, Tira, and Koalib gives some indication of the general trend in these tribes. How far the data are representative also of other Nuba groups I cannot say.

Tribe	*Number of Women*	*Children Born*	*Children Alive*	*Children Born per Mother*	*Children Alive per Mother*
Heiban . . .	100	428	229	4·2	2·3
Otoro . . .	77	377	221	5	2·7
Tira . . .	112	316	189	2·8	1·7
Koalib . . .	33	107	61	3·2	1·7

It will be seen from these figures that in certain tribes (Heiban, Otoro) the population shows a slight increase, while in others (Tira, Koalib) it tends to remain stationary. In other words, if we take three adults (a man and two wives) as the average family nucleus, their number will have increased in the next generation to four to five in Heiban and Otoro, and will have remained more or less unchanged in Tira and Koalib. Under 'children alive' I have grouped the progeny up to the age of fourteen to sixteen. Considering that normal mortality is bound to reduce their number after this age, and before they have themselves founded new families, the 'stationary' population may well turn out to be a decreasing population.

The low birth-rate in Tira and Koalib is correlated with a high sterility rate. Calculated in percentages, the proportion of childless women amounts to 5 in Heiban, 1·3 in Otoro, 7 in Tira, and to a probably much higher figure in Koalib (here the smallness of the group examined forbids a more definite statement). The high proportion of sterility in Tira and Koalib offers a clue for the explanation of the so very much lower birth-rate in these groups. It must be attributed to the spreading of venereal disease, specially gonorrhoea and syphilis in a secondary and tertiary stage, which followed in the wake of intensified contact with Arabs and Arab towns, and to which the Tira and Koalib have been much longer exposed than the Otoro, who till recently enjoyed a comparative

isolation.[1] Here as everywhere, however, the isolation is breaking down. I may mention in this connexion that the complaint that women bear fewer children nowadays than formerly is widespread in the Nuba Mountains—apparently not without foundation. Where the birth-rate differs in marked degree in neighbouring groups the fact is generally well known: the people of Heiban and Tira frequently comment on the fecundity of the Otoro women.

I must add, however, that it is difficult to state with any certainty whether or not venereal diseases have been brought into the Nuba Mountains from outside. Two small groups in the west, Tullishi and Kamdang, claim to be without syphilis and gonorrhoea; indeed, they explain their reluctance to intermarry with neighbouring groups with the fear of contracting these diseases (*see* p. 322). I do not think myself that there is any truth in this claim. For the majority of Nuba tribes accept venereal disease as something that has always been known in their countries, and certain local methods of treatment of the primary lesions (*circumcision being one of them*) are too firmly established to be of recent origin. Yet hospital returns show beyond doubt that increased contacts with Arabs and the urban centres of Kordofan or the Sudan at large also mean increased danger of infection. The carriers of infection are mostly the young men of the tribe, who go to work in the large towns or serve in Army or police before marrying and settling down in their villages. The infection then spreads through normal connubial life, and to an even greater extent through the sexual promiscuity common in all Nuba communities.[2] It seems significant that in the tribes whose contacts with Arabs and town life are of more recent date the symptoms of primary infection are very marked, while tribes which have maintained such contacts for a longer period appear to have reached a stage of relative immunity, in which primary infections are less pronounced than the effects of the secondary or tertiary stage, among which we have to number sterility.

In the following chart I have summarized the data on infant mortality. The surprisingly high mortality in the age groups of 10-15 among the Otoro appears to be due to two factors: the strenuous and exposed life of the Otoro boys of that age, who, unlike their Heiban age mates, live in the unhealthy cattle camps until they marry; and also to the poor food on which the Otoro boys subsist—unlike the Tira boys of that age, they drink little milk and are generally more poorly fed. I am inclined to regard malnutrition, both of infants and mothers, also as the main cause of the very high mortality rate—the highest of all age

[1] I was informed by the Assistant Medical Officer in charge of the Dispensary at Knuda, which is attended by both Tira and Otoro, that gonorrhoea occurs only among the Tira patients.

[2] Hospital statistics show that the number of women in the Eastern Jebels who seek medical treatment for venereal diseases is twice that of the men; this is precisely the average proportion of wives per man in that area—which seems to prove that the infection is contracted to a large extent in normal marital intercourse.

groups—which occurs in the first three years of life, i.e. before weaning (*see* Appendix II). In the other age groups malarial infection most probably plays a dominant part.

Tribe	*Total*	*Miscarriage or Still Birth*	*Death when under* 1	*Death when* 2–3	*Death when* 4–6	*Death when* 7–9	*Death when* 10–15
Heiban . . .	204	29	74	35	48	15	3
Otoro . . .	178	9	61	43	22	21	22
Tira . . .	132	8	46	38	19	18	3

APPENDIX II

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

GENERALLY speaking, the Nuba Hills are not a healthy country, and the Nuba peoples not a healthy race. Malaria is rife everywhere; the rapid changes of temperature prove trying to many weaker people, especially if their resistance is lowered by a poor and unbalanced diet. In the past, when the Nuba tribes had to restrict their cultivation to small, overworked areas within the protecting walls of the mountain ranges, their nutrition suffered through the insufficient and insecure supply of the staple crops. I have spoken of the famines which regularly ravaged the hills. To-day malnutrition has not disappeared, although it has largely changed its form. Agricultural production has increased tenfold; but a considerable proportion of farm produce is now used for sale or exchange, in response to the new economic demands which followed culture contact. Game, which played an important part in the diet of these peoples, has disappeared almost completely from the neighbourhood of many hills. The cattle are in most parts of poor stock, producing little milk. Again, formerly communities and tribes constantly raided each other's herds, thus obtaining a steady meat supply; for they would never slaughter their own cattle except on certain ritual occasions. No need to say that under the modern order this disturbing system of 'exchange' can no longer be permitted.

In the following I give an outline of the diet of three tribes, Heiban, Otoro, and Tira. Let me stress again that the facts mentioned here may not apply equally to other tribes. The Korongo and Moro, for example, appear to be of much better physique, and to suffer much less from malnutrition. On the other hand, malnutrition of the kind as we shall describe it seems also common in Nyima, Tullishi, and Koalib.

The nutritive deficiencies can be classed under three headings: (1) deficiencies in certain important foodstuffs; (2) under-nourishment; (3) deficiencies due to special food avoidances or idiosyncrasies.

(1) These deficiencies are either seasonal or perennial. The most marked seasonal deficiency is one of leguminous food (i.e. food containing vitamin C). Though greens are available throughout the year, they are available in sufficient quantities only during three months. Moreover, the nutritive value of the various greens is probably very unequal. Two of them are leaves of trees—*tibeldi* (*Andonsonia digitata*) and *goghan* (*Maba abyssinica*); one consists of the leaves of beans; the remaining two are wild-growing greens, called, in Arabic, *rigila* (*Portulaca oleracea*) and *mulakhiya* (*Corchorus tridens*). These greens are eaten either raw, with simsim or grain porridge, or cooked in simsim oil.

The seasonal distribution of these greens is shown in the chart below.

The chart also shows another seasonal shortage—namely, the scarcity of the staple foods, simsim (*Sesamum indicum*) and grain (*Andropogon Sorghum*), which is apt to occur shortly before the harvest. The latter shortage is rarely serious, since normally the newly cut light grain would supply the immediate needs. Fresh maize in August and fresh beans in December-January constitute an important seasonal contribution to the diet. We note that the period during which food is comparatively plentiful is one of very intensive activity: clearing, weeding, and re-planting all fall in this period. Another period of equally exhausting work, comprising the final weeding and, eventually, threshing (though the latter represents only a short spell of heavy work), coincides with a period of relative scarcity.

Seasonal Food Supply

Leguminosae				Mulakhiya Rigila								
	Leaves of *tibeldi* tree			Leaves of beans				Leaves of *goghan* tree				
Cereals				Possible shortage of simsim				Possible shortage of grain				
			Fresh maize	New light grain				New simsim and beans			New heavy grain	
			RAINY SEASON					DRY SEASON				
April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	

A very marked perennial deficiency is that of meat (causing a lack of animal protein in the Nuba diet). It is, as I have pointed out, a fairly recent deficiency, resulting from the disappearance of game. Meat appears as more regular food only during the main hunting season, in the early rains. But this enrichment of the menu benefits only the old men, to whom a very large proportion of the meat must be presented as a matter of etiquette, or who would claim it for the various rituals falling in the season. During the rest of the year meat is eaten very irregularly, whenever families perform a sacrifice or arrange a funeral or some other kinship feast. Again the old men occupy a privileged position, being invariably among the guests of these feasts and ceremonies. Indeed, these old men (the Otoro or Tira *dermoco*) would claim that they 'always eat meat'; but this is an exaggeration—a statement to which they are committed by their status. Besides, the meat portion allotted to the single individual is small, often less than 1–2 lbs. On all these occasions of meat-eating women receive a very small share, if they share in it at all.

The irregularity of the meat supply renders proper statistical data

impossible. I may, however, quote a few typical cases. A number of young men whom I found eating meat at the communal meal which concluded a cicatrization ceremony in Otoro (in February) were eating their first meat in three months; a man of about forty to forty-five had not eaten meat for six weeks; another man had eaten no meat for two months, but afterwards ate meat every second day for about a fortnight, attending various family feasts.

The diet of all Nuba tribes is rich in one foodstuff—fats. Their staple food, simsim and simsim oil, is very rich in fats, as are also groundnuts, which are important especially as children's food. Children eat groundnuts at odd times, and even young boys and girls have, as I have mentioned, small groundnut plots of their own.

(2) Even in the best time of the year, the quantities of food which the Nuba consume are very small. They are, incidentally, said to be much larger now than of old, when cultivation was on a smaller scale. I examined the daily consumption of five Otoro and five Heiban households during a fortnight at two different times of the year: in February, i.e. in the middle of the dry season, when food is plentiful, and in August, in the middle of the rains, when the stores are gradually getting low. The families examined were roughly of the same size, comprising man and wife, and one or two children; they comprised both well-to-do and poorer households. The daily consumption seems little affected either by the economic position or by the difference in season; the latter testifies to the careful planning of consumption. But this planning is possible only on a very low level of subsistence. The average number of meals eaten by adults is eight to nine meals in a week. On some days one eats one meal only, either in the morning or evening; on others two meals; and on some days no meal at all. To subsist on one meal a day is considered quite normal. The meals consist either of unmilled grain boiled in water (the Arab *balila*) or grain porridge prepared with simsim oil (*asida*). For the former 1½ lb. of grain is used per adult; for the latter, half that amount. The corresponding portions of children are approximately 1 lb. and ½ lb. Children are fed a little better than adults; they are often given *balila* in the morning even when their parents have no morning meal that day. Only the men and women who work on the land have regularly two meals a day; often they even have a third meal, taking some food with them to the farm, where they eat it at noon.

The daily meals of adults are often replaced by beer. If a beer feast takes place in some house, either in the course of a kinship ceremony or after collective farmwork, the guests would eat nothing in their own homes that day, relying entirely on the beer.

Nuba diet is supplemented at certain times of the year by foodstuffs whose nutritive value is not clear, such as locusts, when they appear in the country, or certain beetles which are gathered in the rains.

(3) The list above made no reference to milk, which plays a very unequal part in the diet of the Nuba tribes. The drinking of milk is

greatly affected by tribal idiosyncrasies and food avoidances. Thus in Otoro and Heiban some men and young lads eat milk, both sweet and sour, with *asida*, but do not drink milk by itself; others dislike milk altogether; the women drink very little milk, and only curd, sour milk which has been left standing a long time. In Tira both men and women occasionally eat *asida* with sour milk; young lads, on the other hand, drink plenty of milk by itself. In Moro, both men and women, young and old, love milk.

We have heard that in nearly all Nuba tribes newly married wives are forbidden to drink milk from their husbands' cows or in their husbands' house till they have had their second or third child. Thus the women are deprived of the most essential food in their first pregnancies. In some tribes the young wife stays in her parents' house till after the birth of her first child; the nutritive deficiency is thus somewhat mitigated, but not eliminated, since the woman would spend the post-pregnancy period after the first child as well as the subsequent pregnancies in the home of her husband. I cannot go into the various customs surrounding childbirth. Let me only say that in many tribes the newborn may not be fed by the mother for three to five days after birth, and often goes without any food during that time. If the mother dies in childbed no effort is made to save and feed the child; rather it is expected to die with the mother. These facts must greatly contribute to the high infant mortality which our statistics have shown.

Malnutrition is one, if not the main, cause of the many intestinal and skin diseases from which the Nuba suffer. But their health is undermined also by other, more fatal and partly endemic diseases: we have mentioned yellow fever, cerebrospinal meningitis, venereal diseases, and —bearing the sinister accent of a mystic punishment—leprosy. Leprosy is indeed widespread; but whether the incidence alone can account for the prominent place which this disease occupies in the thoughts and social norms of the people must remain a moot question. We may, however, suggest an explanation for the striking assurance with which the Nuba discover the effectiveness of this mystic sanction. The early symptoms of leprosy are difficult to identify and to distinguish from skin diseases: often the two must be confused—especially where consciousness of guilt rather than dispassionate observation guides the diagnosis.

INDEX

INDEX

ABORTION, 119, 223, 288
Administration: British, xi, xii, 112, 114, 147, 247, 310, 311, 483, 497, 504; modern, 34, 162, 323, 351, 354, 438, 451, 469 et seq.; Native, 262–3, 312, 469 et seq., 489, 495, 497, 505
Adolescence, female, 132, 137, 238–9, 274, 294–6, 341 et seq., 378, 413, 414, 438; male, 132–40, 201, 229 et seq., 241 et seq., 274, 293 et seq., 296 et seq., 341 et seq., 378, 406 et seq., 437–8, 482
Adoption of children (orphans, illegitimate children, etc.), 273, 289, 290, 376; in homicide, 153, 306; of sons, 121; of wives into husband's clan, 108, 212, 283, 335, 371, 429; of slaves, *see* Slaves.
Adultery, 110, 125, 127, 149, 172, 202, 203, 222, 226, 255, 291, 314, 348, 356, 404, 405, 435, 458, 473, 490, 503, 505, 506
Affiliation. *See* Descent.
Age classes, grades, 53, 132 et seq., 162, 170, 171, 230 et seq., 243, 265, 296, 297 et seq., 406 et seq., 437, 438–9, 476, 482
Agricultural technique, xii, 15–22, 517, 518
Ambassador, tribal. *See* 'Chief of the Path'.
Anson, W. R., on Law and Custom, 501 n.
Anthropology, 7, 9, 100, 105; applied, 8, 498–9, 510
Arab civilisation, xiii, 10; contacts, influence: 3, 77, 82, 196, 197, 212, 238–40, 255, 322, 330, 363, 374, 395, 447, 468, 475, 481 et seq., 491, 515
Arkell, A. J., 4
Austin, on Jurisprudence, 502 n.
Avoidances, chief's, 457–8; clan, 197, 424; eating, drinking: 98, 102, 103, 104, 278, 304, 330, 367, 394, 395, 424; in-law, 103–4, 211, 280, 334, 370, 391, 395, 427, 428, 507; kinship, 102–4, 212, 394, 395. *See also* Tabus.

Baramka, 438–9
Barter, and tribal 'truce', 70, 321
Bayel, 156–7, 160, 164, 440, 443, 445 et seq. *See also* Shaman, Spirit possession.
Birth rate, 122, 415, 514–15
Birth ritual, observances, 96, 187, 197, 264, 265, 370, 384, 387, 388, 429, 520
Blood brothers, 108, 213, 284, 394, 395, 430, 453
Blood feud, revenge, 135, 152, 158, 185, 243, 250, 277, 278, 282, 301, 304, 305, 349, 368, 389, 445, 463, 464, 474, 479, 492, 502, 506
Blood money, 158, 251, 255, 257, 304, 306, 307, 314, 462, 465, 466, 468, 474, 479, 492, 506
Blood pact, 454, 468
Bondage, 306
Bride-price, 52–3, 55, 121–2, 217–8, 274, 286, 291, 296, 334, 373–4, 395, 399, 404, 428, 431; between homosexuals, 285; and children, 121–4, 226, 227, 340, 374, 403; composition, value of: 114 et seq., 218–21, 223, 287, 336–7, 373–4, 392, 397–400, 431–2; as contract, 116, 222, 288, 337, 375, 401, 432; and culture change, 76–7, 218, 374, 401, 511; disputes over, 123–4, 221, 290, 375, 433; and fertility, 117, 222, 288, 338, 375, 376, 401–3, 432; refund, 107, 123, 224, 225, 290, 340, 375, 402, 432; and sex prerogative, 118, 222–3, 224, 288–9, 339, 374, 403, 433; three aspects of, 116–18
British conquest, régime, rule, 6, 178, 262
Burial. *See* Funeral.

CAPITAL, 55, 57, 77
Cattle, 20, 43, 60, 420, 446; camps, 17, 52, 53 et seq., 62–4, 98 n., 229, 230, 231, 242, 297, 300, 406, 408, 415, 515; raiding, theft, 66, 203, 247
Charms, 156, 487
Chief, chieftainship, xii, 57, 146, 160, 161, 162 et seq., 240, 269 et seq., 309 et seq., 325, 343 et seq., 447 et seq., 465, 469, 472, 476–7, 490–1; growth of, 153–4, 163, 447–8, 472, 504, 513 n.; problem of modern, 493 et seq.
'Chief of the Path', 159, 259, 309–11, 453, 477–8, 492, 494
'Chief of the Women', 240, 438–9
Chiefless societies, 146, 162, 163, 171, 260, 447, 494
Christianity, xiii, 512–3
Circumcision, 59, 81, 140 et seq., 236–7, 294, 406, 414

Circumcision: female, 240, 241 n., 438, 486, 487; male, 237–8, 324, 340, 356, 385, 388, 393, 397, 406–7, 408 et seq., 430, 437, 482, 486, 487; of old men, 237–8
Clan, 9, 10, 92 et seq., 182 et seq., 197 et seq., 269, 274–8, 320, 327–31, 357, 367–8, 379–90, 415, 417–26, 455, 503
  activities, observances, 93, 95 98, 186 et seq., 197 et seq., 249, 250–1, 330, 383–4, 379, 396, 410, 461, 463
  ancestors, 12, 93, 186, 327, 367, 379, 380, 481
  characteristics, 'formal', 'diacritical': 11–12, 187–8, 197, 207, 417
  definition of, 11–12
  heads, 186, 498
  magic, 185, 186, 190 et seq., 200 et seq., 206, 207, 208, 242, 254, 258, 263, 421 et seq.
  spirits, 417 et seq.
  subdivision of, 12, 186, 187, 205–6, 277, 278, 328, 329, 380, 461
  symbols, 94, 95, 187, 197, 278, 367, 368
  'symbiotic'. *See* Social symbiosis.
  'theoretical', 12, 94, 96, 187, 278, 328, 368
Clans, bracketed (co-clans), 380 et seq., 387, 389, 423, 425; and Law, 503, 505, 506; and Political Organisation, 261, 354, 470–1
Code, tribal, 148 et seq., 248 et seq., 302 et seq., 348 et seq., 458 et seq., 500, 510
Consecration of chief, 456–7; of crops, first-fruits, 200, 367, 425; of Shaman, 441, 451
Consumption, 47, 49, 50, 519
Court: federal, 161, 162, 221; High, 160; Native, 112, 128, 159 et seq., 254, 256, 312, 352 et seq., 389, 396, 405, 435–6, 459, 467, 505, 509
Court: contempt of, 352, 473, 495; etiquette, 161, 312, 472
Courtship, 110 et seq., 216 et seq., 286, 336, 372–3, 397, 431
Couvade, 106, 197–8, 214, 265, 283, 334, 384, 392, 429
Crafts, 15, 68–73, 77
Crimes. *See* Offences.
Crops: cash, 22; selection of, 17–19
Cultivation. *See* Agricultural technique.
Culture change, contact, xiii, 69 et seq., 76, 77, 81, 82, 504, 510, 511
Currency, 14

Derangement, mental. *See* Lunacy.
Descent: bilateral, 105, 212, 213, 283, 288, 292, 296, 334, 338, 357, 392, 428
  matrilineal, 9, 10, 11, 51, 52, 103, 106, 107, 152, 171, 213, 274, 278, 281, 283, 288, 324, 327, 331, 333, 335, 356–7, 392, 428, 429
  patrilineal, 9, 10, 11, 92, 93 n., 106, 107, 182, 183, 212, 279, 289, 327, 330, 331, 356–7, 367, 379
  unilateral, 105, 210
Diet, 517–20
Dispensary, 85
Diviner, Divination, 155, 307, 423, 444, 450
Divorce, xiii, 125–8, 225–7, 290, 291, 314, 337, 339–40, 351, 375, 377, 404–5, 434–6, 476, 479, 486, 510
Dowry, 115–16, 122, 220, 221, 286, 374 401
Dreams, 345, 350, 397, 440
Drums, sacred, 206, 412

Education, xi, xiii, 511–12
Egypt, 6 n.
Emotional stability, 174, 266, 317, 428, 445
Exchange, 58–77; of persons, 105, 152 et seq., 250–1, 256, 257, 306, 504
Exogamy, 94, 105, 109, 187, 213, 214, 255, 276–7, 278, 282, 283, 284, 330, 334, 368, 370, 371, 382, 389, 423–4, 428, 459, 473, 500, 507
Expenditure for display, prestige. *See* Wasteful Economy.
Expiation. *See* Rites, purification.

Family: extended, 366, 369; individual, 50, 52, 53, 54, 89, 90, 99, 105, 107–8, 180, 181, 182, 221, 272, 273, 326, 328, 379, 415–17, 427
Famine, 50, 321, 517
Farms: size of, 18; types of, 16, 51
Farmwork: collective, 53–5, 409, 438; for in-laws, 52–3, 136, 398
Federation, political, xi, 262, 469–72, 475–6, 489 et seq., 511
Fines, 76, 82, 168, 255, 291, 292, 314, 352, 353, 459, 460, 466, 473, 474
First-fruit ceremonies, 96–7, 193, 195, 201, 367, 425
Food idiosyncrasies, 189, 517, 520
Freudian, 174
Funeral, 67–8, 173, 187, 190 et seq., 197, 264, 284, 297, 304, 324, 330, 342, 421, 445, 463

Game. *See* Hunting.
Genealogies, 93, 94, 164, 166, 343, 380, 381, 392, 444, 447, 449, 450; of spirits, 419–20, 425, 444
Gold Coast, 1
Government. *See* Administration.

Grain magic, 44–5, 173, 191, 200, 203, 420; priest, 44–45, 155, 164, 270, 271, 324, 355, 458–9
Grain: varieties of, 17–18; storage of, 46–9
Granary, 46, 47, 48, 71, 190, 457 n.; *ceremony of 'entering', 295;* ceremony of 'filling', xii, 49, 106

HAILEY, LORD, xi
Hakuma (Government), 46, 164, 169, 307, 452, 496
Hamitic, 1, 358
Hill priest, 408, 412, 413, 445, 454
Homicide, 4, 151, 160, 187, 213, 249, 255, 256–7, 278, 302 et seq., 307, 314, 330, 348 et seq., 459, 461 et seq., 468, 469, 474, 479–80, 501 et seq.
Homosexual, 109, 214, 242, 285, 300, 396
House: arrangement, types of, 50, 88–9, 180, 181, 271–3, 326–7, 366, 378, 379, 415; building of, 71, 72; and inheritance, 129, 227, 293, 334, 340, 405, 436; and magic, 202, 206, 266; and marriage, 216, 217, 218, 286, 336, 398, 431; and widowhood, 120, 224, 289, 339, 404
Household, 46, 57, 71, 78, 88–9, 180–1, 212, 217, 272, 273, 274, 287, 326, 334, 335, 336, 369, 379, 415
Hunting, 40, 58–9, 98 n., 421, 422, 451
Huxley, J., 512

IDENTIFICATION OF BROTHERS, 101, 210, 281, 332, 369, 390, 391, 428; of grandparent-grandchild, 102, 134, 210, 228, 280–1, 331, 390–1, 428
Incest, 110, 159, 215, 255, 285, 372, 386, 430, 459, 473, 503
Indirect Rule, 481, 493, 494
Industries. *See* Crafts.
Inheritance, 101, 129–31, 227–8, 255, 282, 283, 292–3, 335, 340–1, 377, 405, 436–7, 486, 496, 407
of land, 31–4, 129, 227, 293, 340–1, 377, 405, 436
'anticipated', 293, 296, 298, 318
Insanity. *See* Lunacy.
Intertribal law, 157–9; pacts 158–9, 259, 448, 453–4, 468, 475, 493; relations, 70, 164, 309, 321, 362–3, 468–9, 475, 492–3. *See also* Barter and truce, 'Chief of the Path'.
Islam, Islamic civilization, xi, 197, 483, 484, 485, 511–13

JEALOUSY, 118, 127, 171, 212, 222, 248–9, 285, 324, 339, 377, 403, 433, 460; of the dead, 404

KINDRED, 92, 99, 104, 209, 212, 278, 331, 368, 390, 426; definition of, 12
King-maker, 325, 344, 346, 355
Kingship. *See* Chieftainship.
Kinship, 8, 9, 99, 209–14, 278 et seq., 331 et seq., 368 et seq., 390 et seq., *426 et seq., 476, 477, 505*
etiquette, 102, 103, 115, 211, 212, 283, 331, 370, 391, 427
terminology, 8, 99–100, 103 n., 209, 279–80, 284, 331–2, 369, 371, 372, 390, 396, 426, 427–8, 430. *See also* Identification of brothers, Identification of grandparent-grandchild.
terms: classificatory, 100, 134, 210, 211, 213, 214, 279, 280, 282, 331, 333, 371, 390, 420, 427, 428; descriptive, 210, 213, 279, 331, 332, 426, 427, 428
Kujur, 418, 421, 440, 441–7, 448, 451–7, 458, 459, 465, 466, 467, 474, 475, 478, 488. *See also* Spirit Possession.

LABOUR, COLLECTIVE: *on farm*, 54–5; organization team, 50–7; wage, 40, 56–7, 165
Land, acquisition of, 29; borrowing of, 36–9; clearing of, 29
purchase, 34–6; resources, 22–9; rights, titles: 26; seizing of, 352
Language, xii, 3, 84, 179, 269, 319, 320, 360
Law, modern, 159–62, 247, 248, 254 et seq., 311 et seq., 351 et seq., 402, 498, 505 et seq.; traditional, *see* Tribal Code; theory of primitive, 499 et seq.
Leprosy, 4, 95, 98, 109, 110, 149, 151, 173, 214, 250, 252, 256, 266, 303, 304, 306, 335, 336, 349, 403, 435, 462, 463, 465, 474, 520
Levirate, 117, 119, 120, 123, 172, 225, 266, 290, 334, 371, 376, 401, 402, 404, 434
Lightning, 192, 195, 248, 258, 467
Lineage, 186, 327, 328, 332, 334, 356, 357; definition of, 186 n.
Lingua franca, 3
Livestock, 59–68, 129 et seq., 227, 236, 293, 334, 405
Locusts, 21, 204, 325
Lunacy, 109, 192, 196, 201, 214, 336, 435, 442

MACDIARMID, P. A. AND D. N., 3
Magic, 87, 95, 173, 192 et seq., 195, 199, 248, 258, 265, 307, 324, 325, 345, 394, 420, 422, 458, 482, 488; 'automatic', protective, 202, 204, 253, 265, 423; healing, 95, 192, 199, 201, 204, 445; milk, 173, 201, 420, 421. *See also* Grain magic, Rain magic, Clan magic.

Mahdi, Mahdist régime, wars, Mahdiya, 5, 6, 166–7, 178, 447
Malinowski, B., 500
Malnutrition, 515, 517
Markets, 50, 74, 316
Marriage, xiii, 109–19, 214–24, 274, 284–9, 299, 300, 325, 335, 336–9, 371–6, 384, 395–404, 429, 430–4, 474, 476, 510; ceremony, 112, 118, 218, 286, 431; consummation, 112, 217, 218, 222, 242, 286, 297, 336, 372, 373, 385, 386, 387, 397, 431; endogamous, 110, 368, 396; restrictions, rules, 109, 214, 215, 282, 284–5, 330, 336, 368, 370, 371–2, 394, 395–6, 427, 430; by capture, 111–12, 490, 510; intermarriage, xiii, 269, 274, 302, 321, 363, 364, 372, 389, 395, 430, 489
Matrilineal descent, features, principle. *See* Descent.
Medicine-man, -woman, 57, 76, 261, 307
Menstruation, 132, 183, 197, 264, 265, 284, 294, 295
Migrations, 4–6, 84, 86, 170–1, 176, 271, 319, 358, 360, 362, 364, 415, 430
Milner Commission, 593 n.
Moiety, 424, 425, 429, 479
Money, xiii, 72, 74, 76–7, 82, 400, 436
Myths. *See* Origin.

NAMES, NAME-GIVING, 106, 133, 140, 213, 235, 283, 334, 370, 392–3, 483
Neurosis, neurotic, 173, 442, 445, 477
Newbold, Sir Douglas, xi, xii.
Nilotes, nilotic, 1, 2

OATHS, 192, 253–4, 257, 307, 316, 350, 466–7, 409
Offences, and crimes, 501 et seq., 507–8; kinship, 459, 473, 508; matrimonial, 150, 249, 302, 389, 460, 501, 505; property, 149–50, 202, 248, 302, 348, 460–1, 501; religious, 149, 458–9, 473, 508
Ordeals, 155, 192, 253–4, 257, 307, 351, 450, 466–7, 509
Origin, myths of, traditions of, 4–5, 84, 175–6, 187, 268–70, 319, 323, 360, 363, 383, 419, 443, 449

PATRILINEAL DESCENT, FEATURES, PRINCIPLE. *See* Descent.
Pax Britannica, xii, 5, 160, 177
Polygamy, scale of: 116, 214, 224, 285, 336, 372, 397, 430
Population movement, 514–16. *See also* Migrations.
Pottery, 72
Prestige, expenditure for. *See* 'Wasteful' economy.
Property, 51, 68–77, 129 et seq., 227, 246, 283, 292–3, 340
Psychology, psychological, xii, 8, 108, 172, 173, 266, 318, 323, 440, 442, 477, 488
Puberty, 132, 133–4, 229, 238, 239, 241, 294, 295, 296, 372, 397, 406

RADCLIFFE BROWN, A. R., 500 n.
Rain magic, 193–5, 200, 325, 347, 367, 368, 423, 446; maker, priest, xii, 155, 164, 363, 408–9, 412, 449, 450, 451, 452, 466, 485, 513 n.
Rites de passage, 242, 294, 295, 341, 343
Rites, Rituals: fertility, 106, 192, 200–1, 204, 206, 294, 270, 342, 408, 420, 421, 445; first-fruit, 96, 187, 191, 367, 420; purification, 149, 152, 153, 304, 385, 459; seasonal, 44, 46, 96, 139, 173, 191, 199, 200, 294, 342, 408, 420, 450; signal, 44, 45, 200, 201, 242
Ritual directions, 96, 107, 187, 197
Ritual numbers, 96, 97, 188–9, 368, 384, 386 n.

SALMOND, ON JURISDICTION, 499 n., 502 n.
Schools: Government, xiii, 85, 493, 511: Mission, 85, 103 n., 128, 133, 511, 512
Seed grain, 21, 200, 420
Seligman, C. G., 1, 3, 6
Settlement: forms of, 87 et seq., 179, 270, 322, 378, 379, 414–15; and land, 24–6
Sex, sexual, 104, 107, 109, 118–19, 172–3, 212, 214, 222, 230, 265, 288, 289, 297, 300, 339, 386, 395, 399, 403, 476, 479, 484; perverts, *see* Homosexual; shame, 104, 107, 217, 218, 342, 391, 395, 398
Shaman, Shamanism, 9, 156, 358, 364, 440, 446, 476, 477, 480. *See also* Spirit possession.
Slaves, 55, 271, 393; adoption into kinship group, 109, 212, 284, 371, 394, 430
Spear-fighting, 243, 297, 299, 304
Spear; sacrificial, sacred, 105, 345
Spelling of vernacular words, 14
Spirit double, 173
Spirit possession, 408, 412, 426, 440 et seq., 467, 477, 488; incarnation, 392, 409, 417 et seq., 542–6, 440 et seq., 451–2, 471, 480; priests, 57, 378, 385, 387, 392, 408, 409, 440 et seq., 480; world, 420, 443
Stick-fighting, 213, 230 et seq., 239, 243 et seq., 248, 249, 253, 257, 265, 394, 406, 410, 460

Suicide, 119, 172–4, 216 n., 266, 317, 478, 480
Symbiosis, social, 9, 10, 207–8, 246, 363, 480
Syphilis. *See* Venereal diseases.

TABUS: food, xiii, 58, 87, 97–8, 104, 149, 185, 188, 189 et seq., 198, 257, 278, 283, 335, 367, 383, 384, 422, 424, 457, 459, 485–6, 508; on farmland, 44; milking, 61, 335 n.; seasonal, 45, 149, 459. *See also* Avoidances.
Taxation, 2, 82, 165, 171, 264, 471, 495, 498
Totemism, totemic, 189, 196, 264, 422
Transvesticism, 242, 285
Tribe, definition of, 12

VENEREAL DISEASES, 199, 201, 322, 515

WAR, 84, 147, 154, 177, 259, 301, 302, 346, 349, 420, 421, 445, 447, 453, 475
'Wasteful' economy, 65, 67, 68, 82, 141
Wealth, xii, 49, 50, 65 et seq., 81, 83, 309, 334, 337, 353
Widowhood, 119 et seq., 224, 289–90, 339, 352, 375, 376, 377, 401, 402, 402, 404, 429, 432, 434, 500, 501
Witchcraft, 155, 157, 160, 202, 204, 254, 257, 296, 307 et seq., 317, 318, 323, 325, 331, 335, 336, 346, 350, 352, 467, 501, 508, 509
Wrestling, 136, 231–2, 234, 296, 297 298, 394, 406, 410, 411

YEAR'S CYCLE, 40–6

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